

RESPECT IN THE WORKPLACE

A Guide to Understanding Our
Respect in the Workplace Procedure



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GUIDING VALUES

The inherent right to be treated with dignity and respect is central to Catholic values and beliefs. Edmonton Catholic Schools is committed to the creation of a working environment which fosters mutual respect for the dignity and well-being of all adults on Edmonton Catholic Schools' premises.

The Respect in the Workplace Procedure is supported by our Core Values:

DIGNITY AND RESPECT: We are called to value each person and to treat one another with compassion.

HONESTY: Be noble of mind and heart, generous in forgiving.

LOYALTY: We strive towards loyalty to the vision, mission, goals, and fundamental purpose of our school Division.

FAIRNESS: We seek unity without uniformity, symmetry without sameness, and diversity without divisiveness.

PERSONAL AND COMMUNAL GROWTH: At Edmonton Catholic Schools, we are an organization of people, committed to the growth of the whole person.

These values provide a common understanding of the behaviours expected of those employed with Edmonton Catholic Schools. They describe how we go about doing our best work and ensure that this is as important as the work completed.



“Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are.”

John Wooden

RESPONSIBILITIES

A respectful workplace requires the cooperation and support from each and every employee in our organization. Everyone has a responsibility to set a positive example and behave in a manner which will not reasonably offend, intimidate, embarrass, or humiliate others, whether deliberate or unintentional.

As the Commitment to Inclusive Communities Procedure states: "A nurturing, inclusive community is one in which each person is welcomed, accepted, and supported as a child of God, therefore any discrimination is unacceptable and will be addressed."

As part of the commitment to Inclusive Communities, the employees of Edmonton Catholic Schools will conduct themselves in a manner which is consistent with building a culture of acceptance by holding both themselves and others accountable for their language and behaviours.

ECSD leadership has a responsibility to not only ensure a safe workplace free of disrespectful behaviours (including discrimination and violence) but to also empower employees to proactively address and respond to disrespectful behaviours (such as misunderstandings or workplace conflicts) in an effective and respectful manner.

All ECSD staff have a responsibility to act on this empowerment: to respectfully address and resolve conflicts with co-workers in a timely manner and as the need arises.

INTENT

Edmonton Catholic Schools seeks to foster an environment in which each individual is valued and heard. There are times when people attempt to excuse disrespectful behaviours by saying someone may have "not meant what they said" or "that is just their personality". It is important that everyone takes into consideration how their actions impact others. The intent of the behaviour is not as relevant as the impact the behaviour has on the individual. Whether the behaviour was intentional or not may be difficult to determine; therefore, we must take accountability for our actions. If it is found that someone has willfully done something to harm a co-worker, subordinate, or someone they report to, this will be considered a serious, aggravating factor in determining whether discipline is appropriate.



"You can try to explain your intentions, but it's up to other people to judge your impact."

Adam Grant

WORK

Work includes all Division assigned duties and any responsibilities associated with the need to be present at a Division site during regular working hours; however, activities that occur any time on Division property or at a Division event outside of regular working hours is also considered work. This includes any overtime work.

WORKPLACE

Our workplace is any place where an Edmonton Catholic School employee is permitted to carry out their work duties and includes travel, conferences, and work-related social gatherings or events, regardless of location.

CONFLICT

Conflict can arise out of a disagreement or a difference of approaches, ideas, or interests. Conflict is expected in workplaces. It is a normal part of working together and can often have positive outcomes in workplaces. Timely and effective conflict management is key, as it can turn conflict into a positive, resulting in greater understanding, improved collaboration, and better results.

We should follow the “Platinum Rule”: Treat others how they want to be treated to show respect for everyone with whom you interact in the workplace.

WORKPLACE BULLYING

Bullying is a repeated and ongoing pattern of negative behaviour aimed at a specific person or group. The Canadian Centre of Occupational Health and Safety describes bullying as follows:

Bullying is usually seen as acts or verbal comments that could psychologically or ‘mentally’ hurt or isolate a person in the workplace. Sometimes, bullying can involve negative physical contact as well. Bullying usually involves repeated incidents or a pattern of behaviour that is intended to intimidate, offend, degrade or humiliate a particular person or group of people. It has also been described as the assertion of power through aggression.

Examples of bullying include the following:

- excluding or isolating someone socially;
- criticizing a person persistently or constantly; and
- intruding on a person’s privacy by pestering, spying, or stalking.

WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

The *Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act* defines harassment as follows:

(q) any single incident or repeated incidents of objectionable or unwelcome conduct, comment, bullying or action by a person that the person knows or ought reasonably to know will or would cause offence or humiliation to a worker, or adversely affects the worker's health and safety, and includes

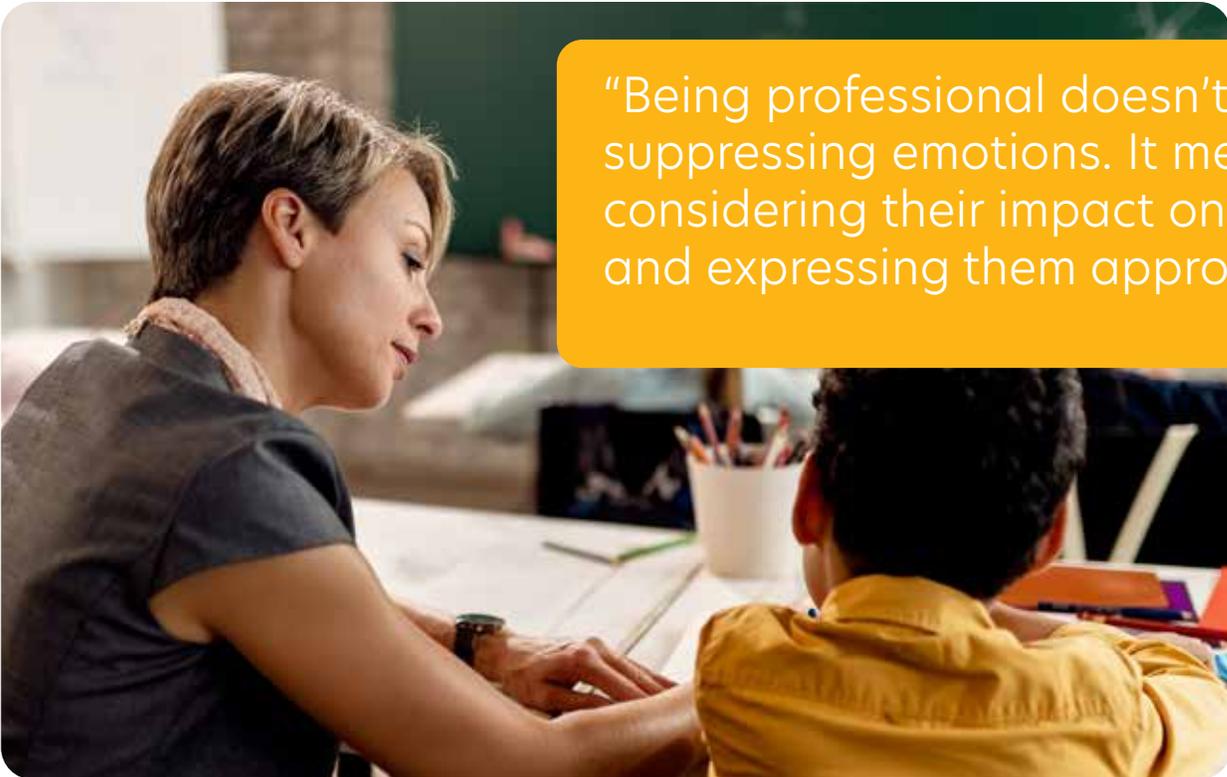
(i) conduct, comment, bullying or action because of race, religious beliefs, colour, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, gender, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation, and

(ii) a sexual solicitation or advance,

but excludes any reasonable conduct of an employer or supervisor in respect of the management of workers or a work site.

Workplace harassment may include a single incident or a series of incidents. Examples of workplace harassment include the following:

- abuse of authority - using a position of seniority or power to intimidate, demean or undermine someone;
- taunts or jokes that negatively target or isolate a person or group;
- derogatory or condescending remarks, actions, or gestures that undermine someone else's work, reputation or confidence; and
- frequent yelling or shouting.



"Being professional doesn't mean suppressing emotions. It means considering their impact on others and expressing them appropriately."

Adam Grant

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination based on the ground of gender, which includes gender identity and gender expression, which is prohibited under the Alberta Human Rights Act. Alberta's Human Rights Commission defines sexual harassment as any unwelcome sexual behaviour that adversely affects, or threatens to affect, directly or indirectly, a person's job security, working conditions, or prospects for promotion or earnings; or prevents a person from getting a job, living accommodations, or any kind of public service. Sexual harassment may include a single incident or a series of incidents. Examples of sexual harassment include:

- commenting on someone else's looks;
- staring, leering, bragging about sexual expertise or experiences;
- suggestive comments or jokes;
- unnecessary physical contact such as unwanted hugging; and
- intrusive questions about a person's private life or body.

Sexual harassment is difficult to navigate. Additional helpful information can be found in the [Alberta Human Rights Commission Sexual Harassment Information Sheet](#). The Commission encourages anyone who believes they have been sexually harassed to make it known to the offender and/or proper officials that something occurred and is not wanted.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

According to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, *violence, whether at a work site or work-related, means the threatened, attempted, or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm, and includes domestic or sexual violence.*

Employees must notify their supervisor of all incidents of workplace violence, even if there was no physical injury, as per the Government of Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Program. Examples of workplace violence include the following:

- threatening behaviour such as shaking fists, destroying property or throwing objects;
- verbal or written threats (any expression of intent to cause harm);
- Angry, violent outbursts; and
- physical attacks or aggression such as hitting, shoving, pushing, or kicking.

Incidents of workplace violence are very serious and Edmonton Catholic Schools will ensure that our employees are supported through any adverse effects. Managers/Principals will encourage affected employees to access a health professional in situations where they have experienced or been exposed to workplace violence.

CONTINUUM OF BEHAVIOURS

It can be difficult to separate workplace behaviours into strict categories of acceptable or unacceptable. Often times, real-life interactions expose us to behaviours that fall somewhere in the middle of these two categories. To better understand the expectation of working together with respect, it is helpful to imagine a continuum of behaviours where one end demonstrates our ideal state of interaction and the other end demonstrates unacceptable behaviours. The continuum concept shows us that it is less important to evaluate behaviours against a strict definition of harassment or bullying, and more important to evaluate whether an action or inaction has negatively (or positively) impacted someone else. The following are examples of behaviours that fall at either end of the continuum. An opportunity exists to intervene or self-correct if we find that behaviours are moving away from those identified as contributing to our ideal, respectful state.

RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOURS

The following behaviours describe our ideal state of interaction. Taking time to ensure we are all exemplifying the following behaviours will move us closer to achieving the respectful workplace we are trying to create:

- Being accountable for your own actions, both mistakes and good work;
- Being courteous when asking others for assistance versus making demands;
- Seeking input from others and being open to ideas;
- Praising and recognizing good work, extra effort, or accomplishments;
- Providing positive reinforcement;
- Offering assistance when someone needs help;
- Saying “please” and “thank you”;
- Communicating openly - with discretion and privacy as needed;
- Providing opportunities for input and participation;
- Giving supportive, constructive feedback or suggestions;
- Demonstrating sympathy and a show of support when someone is having a difficult time;
- Seeking consensus and respectfully working through differences of opinions;
- Providing clear expectations;
- Sharing knowledge and information to help resolve workplace disagreements;
- Being inclusive;
- Being kind and tolerant;
- Mentoring/coaching: Taking the time to develop and coach others;
- Acting honestly;
- Empowering others to speak up;
- Addressing concerns openly and respectfully, in a timely manner;
- Allowing one person to speak at a time;
- Listening openly to other points of view, even when you might disagree; and
- Sharing laughs and social banter.

DISRESPECTFUL BEHAVIOURS

Understanding the types of behaviours that can be considered disrespectful is the key to identifying these behaviours when we see them being displayed, and in turn, evaluating and adjusting our own actions accordingly. Demonstrating the following behaviours in our workplace can negatively impact an individual's self-worth. It is important to note the following behaviours and ensure that we do not demonstrate or tolerate them in our workplace:

- Behaving rudely to coworkers, not saying please or thank you;
- Eye rolling, finger wagging, or other physical gestures that are used to make fun of, express frustration with, or isolate another employee;
- Workplace violence/assault;
- Intimidation, leering, or other objectionable and insulting gestures;
- Threats, including coercion;
- Angry outbursts;
- Unwanted physical contact such as touching, patting, pinching, or punching;
- Encroaching on an individual's personal space;
- Display of pornographic, racist or offensive pictures, or materials;
- Taunting, ridiculing, or belittling;
- Unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendo, or taunting about a person's race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, or sexual orientation of that person or of any other person;
- Abuse of authority that undermines someone's performance or threatens their career;
- Spreading false information about an employee;
- Practical jokes that result in awkwardness or embarrassment;
- Unwelcome enquiries or comments about an individual's personal life;
- Unwelcome remarks about a person's physical attributes or appearance;
- Humiliation in front of others;
- Taking credit for someone else's or a team's work;
- False accusations of disrespectful behaviour;
- Gossiping;
- Ignoring conflict or not addressing difference of opinion as it occurs;
- Purposely and/or regularly interrupting people when they are speaking; and
- Refusing to converse or work with an employee.



WHAT ARE NOT CONSIDERED DISRESPECTFUL BEHAVIOURS?

The following are considered legitimate workplace actions so long as they are carried out in good faith, in a professional manner, and in a non-arbitrary fashion:

- Direct supervision, including on-going discussions about performance expectations
- Assignment of work and direction on how it is to be accomplished
- Requests by supervisors for updates or status reports
- One-on-one discussions between managers, supervisors, and their staff
- Approval or denial of time off

The above noted actions are encompassed by management's legitimate right to run the business of educating students and direct the workforce.

SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES

An allegation of disrespectful conduct at work is serious and has the potential to significantly impact one's career and/or personal well-being. All employees are encouraged to speak to a colleague, principal, or Manager for support or advice when needed. In many instances, open and honest dialogue can go a long way in reaching an informal resolution.

Bargaining unit employees can seek the support and advice of their union representative when dealing with a complaint or an instance of disrespectful behaviour. As a bargaining unit employee, you also have a right to union representation if you are required to answer questions in an investigation, whether the complaint is against you, or you are a witness or the complainant.

The Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP) is another resource available to assist employees and their immediate family members who are experiencing difficulties in their work or personal life. Inkblot Therapy provides accessible mental health and well-being support that is personalized and completely confidential. Inkblot EFAP program can be accessed by calling 1-855-933-0103 (toll free and year-round) or through their website at inkblottherapy.com/asebp.

LEADERS

The privilege of leading others comes with responsibility and, sometimes, challenges. Edmonton Catholic Schools places the highest standards on its leaders to engage and supervise their employees by ensuring the workplace is safe and free of harassment for everyone; addressing workplace conflict when it occurs; setting examples; and, modeling respectful behaviour in their daily work. If leaders are found to have harassed, bullied or disrespected others, the consequences or outcomes, including disciplinary action, could be more severe because of these high standards.

THE ROLE OF THE BYSTANDER

Employees who witness disrespectful behaviour have a responsibility to take action. Bystanders who do not take action may contribute to creating a toxic work environment. If an employee witnesses other employees acting disrespectfully, there is an expectation that this information will be brought forward for resolution.

What can a bystander do? Here are a few ideas:

- A bystander can check in with the affected person to see if they are ok. The bystander can offer them suggestions for support such as reaching out to a supervisor, speaking with Human Resources Services, or seeking advice from the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP).
- If a bystander feels ok to do so, they could respectfully raise the concern when witnessing the disrespectful behaviour.
- A bystander could ask a Supervisor or Human Resources Services for guidance.

FALSE ALLEGATIONS

Making a false allegation against another employee is a serious offense and is considered another form of disrespectful behaviour that will not be tolerated. False allegations are particularly egregious because they force the accused individuals to defend their integrity. The allegations and subsequent investigation can be traumatic and costly regardless of the findings. Where accusations are found to be false, disciplinary action, up to and including termination, may be taken against the person who made the accusation.

“Setting an example is not the main means of influencing others, it is the only means.”
Albert Einstein

REPRISALS

Reprisals against individuals who have reported a complaint or any participants in a workplace investigation are forbidden. Alleged reprisals shall be investigated as formal complaints and, if substantiated, are subject to the same consequences as complaint of harassment.

REQUESTING ANONYMITY OR THAT NO ACTION BE TAKEN

Approaching your principal/manager or Human Resources with concerns about another employee is not helpful unless you are asking them to address the issue. It is not acceptable for a Manager to be asked to listen to someone who they believe has a serious issue, but then be asked not to do anything about it. Therefore, if you feel the issue is significant enough to bring to the attention of your Manager, you should be aware that your Manager may take action to ensure the issue will be addressed. Action taken may involve your Manager providing you with advice on next steps or bringing the concern to the attention of Human Resource Services.

Principals/Managers and Human Resources will keep the details of any reported issues confidential to the best of their ability, however, confidentiality does not mean anonymity. The respondent is entitled to be informed of the allegation in sufficient detail to make a full answer and defense. As well, there may be a need to interview witnesses to incidents. Additionally, in a situation where a disciplined employee grieves this decision there may be further information released through an arbitration hearing.

Edmonton Catholic Schools will not disclose the name of a complainant, alleged respondent or the circumstances related to the issue to any person except where disclosure is necessary to investigate, take corrective action or is required by law. At the request of the respondent, the employer may inform the individuals who were involved with the investigation that inappropriate conduct was found not to have taken place. This may be necessary where the reputation of the respondent was negatively affected by the complaint or investigation.



“Whoever says, ‘I am in the light’, while hating a brother or sister, is still in the darkness.”

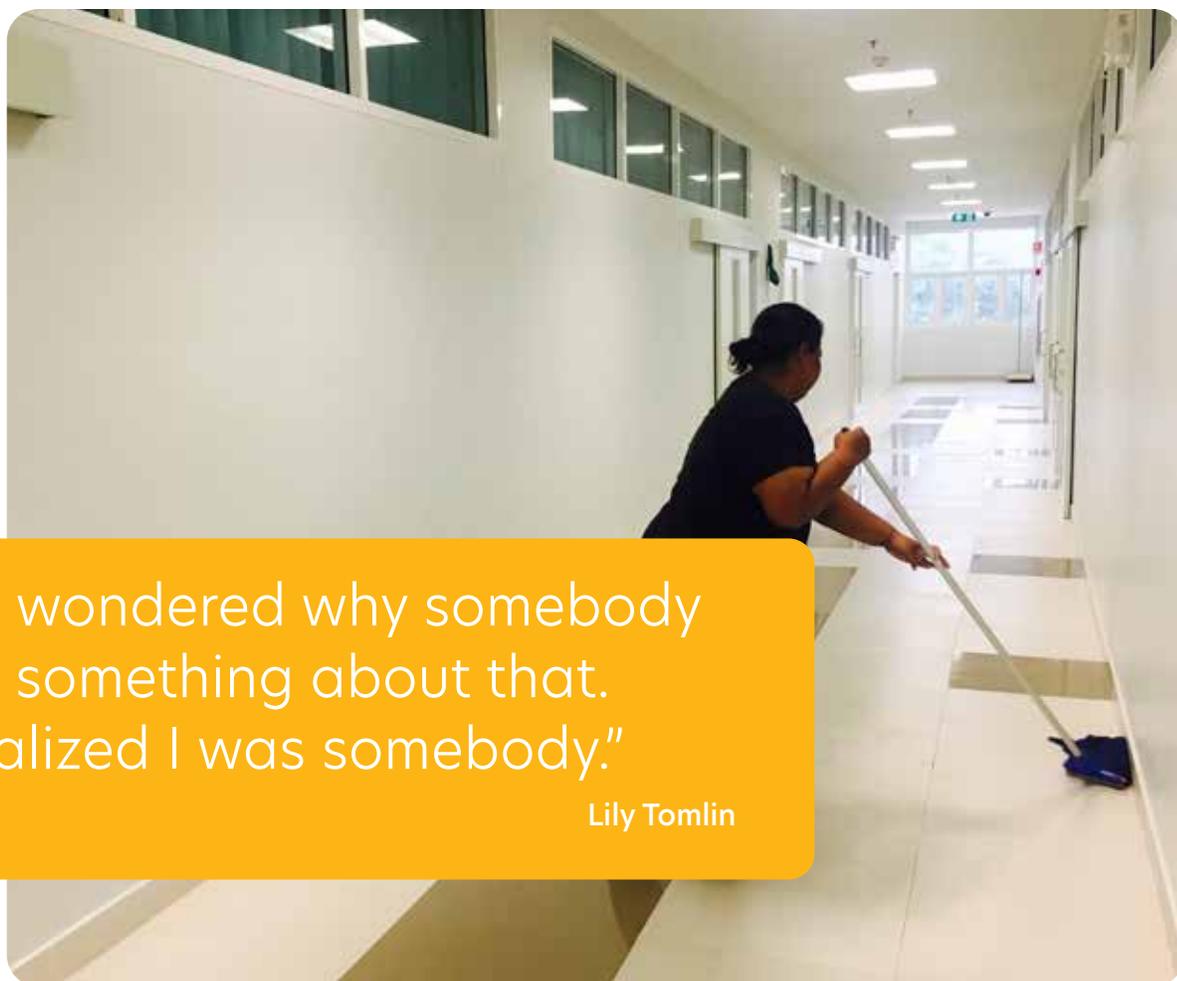
1 John 2:9

BAD FAITH COMPLAINTS

All complaints must be made in good faith. Allegations raised in bad faith, such as those that are frivolous or vexatious in nature, may have a serious impact on individuals within the work area. Investigations are often emotionally charged and the amount of time spent fact finding means the focus is shifted away from Edmonton Catholic Schools' primary goal of educating students. In cases where bad faith is suspected, all those involved may be subject to an investigation, which some might find frustrating and traumatic. If an investigation concludes that a complaint was raised in bad faith, the parties may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

This does not imply that employees should avoid dealing with workplace conflict or feel dissuaded from making a complaint about disrespectful behaviour. It does, however, draw attention to the fact that filing a complaint is a serious matter. Therefore, employees are asked to think carefully and not act impulsively when considering filing a complaint. All employees are encouraged to explore the informal resolution process before considering a formal complaint. The informal process promotes open dialogue between the parties and this may result in a common understanding and resolution.

If a complaint is found to be unsubstantiated, this does not mean that it was made in bad faith.



"I always wondered why somebody didn't do something about that. Then I realized I was somebody."

Lily Tomlin

WORKING TOWARDS RESOLUTION

At any point when dealing with a disrespectful workplace situation, you can seek support and advice from your Principal or Manager, the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP), Employee Relations in Human Resource Services (HRS), or your union representative if you are part of a bargaining unit. You can also refer to this guide, Administrative Policy (AP) 171, along with AP 171 Appendix A and Appendix B for guidance.

Note to all staff: If you belong to a profession governed by a regulatory body, you may also wish to review the expectations as outlined by the regulatory body including standards, regulations, and their code of ethics and conduct, where applicable.

There are two possibilities for resolution: the informal resolution process and the formal resolution process. Prior to initiating a formal complaint, employees are encouraged to engage in the informal resolution process and work together to find a possible resolution.

1. Informal Resolution Process

Informal conflict resolution may be quicker and more effective than a formal approach. It generally involves fewer people, is less disruptive to the educational environment, and is more likely to preserve working relationships. The options and appropriate outcomes are almost limitless and can include mediation or facilitated conversations.

It is important to give this process some time.

Even when the informal process is followed, the Division will implement the most appropriate corrective and restorative measure(s), including discipline if applicable. As with the formal process, any applicable measure will be applied confidentially.

- Speak with the person directly about the behaviours which are affecting you. Talking is often the best way to informally resolve concerns but you can write a note or send an email communication if you prefer.
- If approaching the individual did not resolve the issue or if you do not feel comfortable to approach the individual, talk to your principal or manager or Employee Relations to discuss next steps before filing a formal complaint.
- If your concern involves your principal or manager, you are encouraged to consult your union or Employee Relations in an effort to resolve the matter before filing a formal complaint.
- You may request the assistance of principal or manager or Employee Relations to facilitate or mediate an informal discussion and possible resolution.
- Keep notes with dates and facts.
- If a resolution cannot be achieved informally, you may consider filing a formal complaint. See Formal Resolution Process below.
- Respect everyone's privacy and confidentiality and do not engage or involve others in the incident or in communications.

2. Formal Resolution Process

The employee who files a complaint of harassment or bullying is referred to as the complainant. The person against whom a complaint is submitted is referred to as the respondent.

- Should the complainant decide to proceed with a formal complaint, they will do so by completing the Formal Resolution Process Information Form and forwarding it to their immediate supervisor. The immediate supervisor will forward this form to the Manager of Employee Relations. If the complaint involves the immediate supervisor the Formal Resolution Process Information form shall be forwarded directly to the Manager of Employee Relations.
- A formal complaint must be filed in writing by the employee. A complainant is encouraged to seek assistance from their immediate Supervisor and/or union/association.
- The Manager of Employee Relations or designate shall acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint of harassment to the complainant, respondent, and immediate supervisor within 5 school days of receipt of the formal complaint.
- The complainant and the respondent may be accompanied by a representative of an association/union or other person of choice for the purpose of providing they support during the formal complaint process.
- Individuals who are named as respondents in a formal written complaint have the right to know in a timely fashion that they are the subject of a complaint, what the allegations are, and what process will be followed in the investigation. In particular, a respondent has the right to know the specifics of an allegation, including times, dates, and alleged conduct.
- After an initial review of the complaint, it may proceed to an investigation through the Formal Resolution Process, during which all individuals with relevant information to share will be interviewed.
- The complainant may withdraw the complaint at any stage of the process. The Division may still need to proceed with the investigation depending on the nature and/or severity of the allegations.
- Once the investigation is completed and the findings are reviewed by the appropriate party as determined on a case-by-case basis, a decision will be made regarding appropriate action. As with the informal process, any applicable measure will be applied confidentially.





EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOL DIVISION RESPECT IN THE WORKPLACE

Formal Resolution Process

INFORMATION FORM

This form can be utilized to provide information on situations involving harassment, bullying or other disrespectful workplace behaviour(s) that were not resolved through the Informal Resolution Process. This form is to be completed by an employee filing a formal complaint or by an employee who has experienced workplace violence. (ref. Part 27, of Occupational Health and Safety Code)

Prior to completing this form, please consider which of the following informal resolution options you have explored:

- Have you spoken directly to the individual involved with the situation?
- Have you spoken to your *Manager/Principal* regarding the situation?
- Have you spoken with *Employee Relations* or *Union Representative* regarding the situation?
- Have you requested your *Manager/Principal*, *Employee Relations*, *Union Representative* or another appropriate resource to mediate the situation in order to reach an informal resolution?

If you choose to move forward with submitting this form, please note that every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality, however, anonymity cannot be guaranteed. For more information please reference our *Respectful Workplace* documents.

A) Complainant Contact Information

Name

Position

B) Respondent(s) Information

Please add additional pages if there is more than one respondent

Name

Position

D) Previous Resolution Attempts or Discussion

Name of person to whom complaint was first reported: _____

Have you discussed this situation, and the impact that it has had, with the respondent(s)?

YES _____

NO _____

Have you discussed this situation, and the impact that it has had, with your immediate supervisor?

YES _____

NO _____

E) Submission of the Form

Providing information that has no merit or is frivolous may result in disciplinary action. Please reference the Respectful Workplace documents for more information.

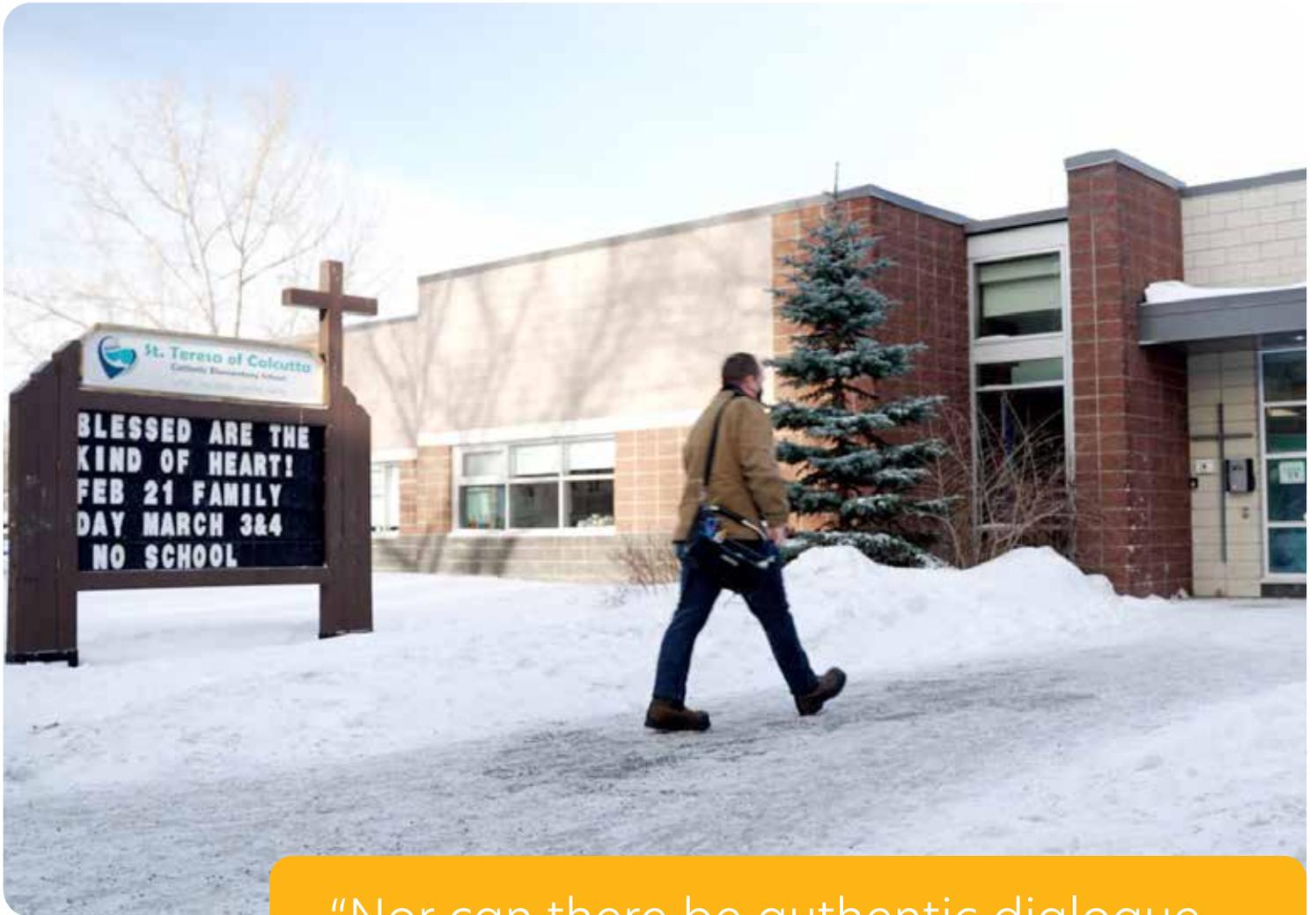
Once this form has been completed in its entirety, both the complainant and their immediate supervisor must sign and date the document. This form should then be forwarded to the Manager of Employee Relations.

Signature of Complainant

Date

Signature of Supervisor

Date



“Nor can there be authentic dialogue unless we are capable of opening our minds and hearts, in empathy and sincere receptivity, to those with whom we speak. For dialogue to take place, there has to be this empathy.”

Pope Francis



RESPECT IN THE WORKPLACE
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