



# Bears paw School



## Parent-Student Handbook 2024-2025

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

## Welcome to Bears paw School

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This Parent-Student Handbook is provided as basic information about our school. More information can be found throughout the year at our website: <https://bearspaw.rallyonline.ca> as well as through on-going forms of communication such as the monthly newsletter, our Friday Fan Out e-mails, teacher e-mails and online communication, and paper memos that go home.

**MISSION**

Bearspaw School empowers learners through authentic and connected learning experiences.

**VISION**

Together we learn, evolve and shine.

**MOTTO**

We Champion Attitude, Effort and Teamwork.

**BELIEFS**

We believe that:

- Learning is the focus and reason for every decision we make.
- Learning should be positive, challenging and rewarding.
- Optimal learning happens in a safe and trusting environment when students, teachers and parents are supported and supportive of one another.
- Learners who understand how they learn, take ownership for their learning, and are empowered to act on their learning, become learners for life.

**WELCOME**

On behalf of the entire staff at Bearspaw School, we welcome you to the school and to the 2024-2025 school year. Bearspaw School offers Kindergarten to Grade eight programming to a population of over 500 students. Situated in the beautiful foothills of the Rocky Mountains, Bearspaw School is a spacious facility staffed by a dynamic team of educators and support staff. A strong sense of community and cooperation has been developed with the help of a very active School Council and the Friends of Bearspaw Education Society (FBES).

It takes a village to raise a child. High value is placed on the home-school relationship. You as parents/guardians play a fundamental role in the education of your child. We are fortunate the majority of our students come to school ready to learn as they come from homes that provide the love and nurturing needed for a healthy mind and body. Parent support of the school also comes from staying informed about your child’s and the school’s activities, cooperating with school policies and procedures, volunteering when possible and encouraging a positive attitude toward the school and learning in general.

**SCHOOL START AND END TIMES**

**Monday-Thursday:** ..... Entry time 8:10. Students in class at 8:20  
 Morning Recess: ..... 10:28 a.m. - 10:44 a.m.  
 Lunch Break: ..... 12:09 p.m. – 12:52 p.m.  
 \*Dismissal: ..... 3:00 p.m.

**Friday:** ..... Entry time 8:10. Students in class at 8:20  
 Midday Break: ..... 10:28 a.m. - 10:52 a.m.  
 \*Dismissal: ..... 1:00 p.m.

**\* Note: Classes start at 8:20 a.m. Students who arrive after 8:20 a.m. are considered late and must sign in at the office.**

**\*\*Note: Friday is early dismissal**

**COMMUNICATION/PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

**Website:** <https://bears paw.rockyview.ab.ca/get-involved/parent-society-fundraising>

## **School Council/FBES**

School Councils were created as advisory groups to help involve parents with the governance of schools. By being involved in School Council, you get to hear monthly updates from our Principal and our school board Trustee, as well as participate in discussions and support important school initiatives. Every parent is welcome to become part of Council and/or to attend the meetings. Further information is posted on the school's website under the School Council tab.

Friends of Bearspaw Education Society (FBES) is a not-for-profit society which fundraises to support school initiatives. Volunteers are recruited each year and parental involvement is always welcome. FBES' funds support literacy, numeracy, technology, cultural and special events at the school as well as enhance resources used in teaching and learning.

## **Newsletters and Friday Fan Out**

Once per month the school will email home a link to the monthly newsletter, Bear Tracks. This will include information about past and upcoming events, dates to remember, and overall school and Rocky View School news and reminders. This newsletter is scheduled the first Monday of each new month.

At the end of every school week, we also email a Friday Fan Out. This includes important dates for the week(s) ahead, and some of the same updates and reminders as found in the newsletter. Our Friday Fan Out also includes a section of Upcoming events at our neighbouring Bearspaw Community Association.

## **Volunteering**

Volunteers are important to the success of many school activities. At the beginning of the school our Volunteer Coordinator send a survey where parents can indicate interest about volunteering for school-wide events. Classroom teachers arrange their own volunteers. Volunteer work changes throughout the grades. In the lower grades, parents are very hands-on in the classroom. In the higher grades, volunteering may be in the library, at a dance or on a field trip. Under Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation (FOIP), all volunteers are required to commit to confidentiality and fill out a Confidentiality form prior to volunteering at school.

**Rocky View Schools requires that all volunteers provide a criminal background check. Background checks are considered valid for 5 years, with an Annual Statutory Declaration.**

An application form is available at the office specific to Bearspaw School and is needed to apply at the RCMP detachment or Calgary Police Service District Office, depending on where your primary residence is located. Volunteers are also required to **sign in at the office and wear a Visitor badge for security reasons** and in the event of a school evacuation. Volunteering is very rewarding and connects parents to their child's school experience.

## **Telephones, Cell Phones and Voice Mail**

Student use of school phones is limited to calling/texting parents for important messages or to inform parents of illness. Students may use classroom phones only after obtaining permission from their teacher. **Personally owned cell phones are permitted to be used during extended break times, only (not between classes), unless requested by the teacher for a special project or if used as a medical monitor. Cell phones must be kept in a locked locker during class time.**

We discourage students from using their devices during an emergency for a number of reasons:

- Cell phones can accelerate the spread of misinformation, rumors and fear;
- Our school phones could become overloaded with calls from concerned parents; and

- Parents may rush to the school at a time when public safety officials may need roads and quick access in and out of our school.

- School administrators and safety officials will likely be using cell phones to communicate. It is possible that many students rushing to use their cell phones in an emergent situation could overload the system or jeopardize the quiet safety of a classroom. Cell phone use could conceivably decrease, not increase school safety during an emergency. Bearspaw School has a voice mail system you can access by dialing 403-239-9607 and following the prompts. We make every attempt to answer each call from 8:00-3:30 daily (8:00-1:30 on Fridays). If it is not answered it means personnel are tied up on another line or helping students/parents at the office.

### **Who To Call When You Have a Concern**

During the course of the year, you may have a concern about your child and his/her programming, relationships, behaviours or any other area. Your child's homeroom teacher is **always** your **first point of contact**. The Child Development Advisor (CDA) is also a good contact person concerning behavioural or social-emotional issues. If you feel the issue or concern has not been resolved through those channels, you are invited to call or email the Administration of Bearspaw School.

### **E-Mail**

E-mail is the preferred method of communication in most cases as teachers can be difficult to reach during the daytime and parents are often hard to reach in the evening. General e-mail etiquette is requested. Staff e-mail addresses can be found on the school's website. Teachers generally do not check their e-mail during the school day. More often, teachers check e-mail after dismissal when students have gone home. **Urgent matters should not be communicated via e-mail.** RVS procedure encourages staff to not check email in the evenings or on weekends, and to send replies within 24 hours on the next school day (ie - a reply on Monday is acceptable for an email sent on Friday.)

### **Calendar**

The school website includes the Rocky View Schools calendar of school breaks and professional learning days, etc. Bearspaw School's specific events are communicated and updated weekly in our Friday Fan Out and newsletters.

## **PROGRAMS**

As a public school, Bearspaw follows the Alberta Education Program of Studies which is available on-line at <https://www.alberta.ca/programs-of-study.aspx>. The parent resource, My Child's Learning, can be found at: <http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/mychildslearning/> and will provide you with a better understanding of Alberta's curriculum and how you can help your child. It tells you what your child is learning, how they're assessed and what resources are available to help them be successful. Bearspaw School provides a variety of programs and services to address the diverse learning needs of our student population. Support is offered to students who experience learning difficulties. We value the importance of parent involvement and recognize that parent support is essential to student success. We work collaboratively with personnel from Rocky View Schools' Student Support Services to develop and implement special programs to meet the needs of our students, and we strive to provide opportunities for all students to succeed as learners. Complementary Courses ("Options") classes are available to students in grade 6, 7 & 8 whereby students choose from a variety of interest-based classes such as Foods, Construction, Robotics, Band, etc. Course selection is dependent upon space and teacher availability and may vary from year to year. Grade 6 students may choose a band or art major.

### **Athletic Program**

Sports are an important part of Bearspaw's culture as we champion "Effort, Attitude and Teamwork". Bearspaw school participates in the Rocky View Schools (RVS) extra-curricular sports to the fullest extent possible as student interest and coach-volunteer availability determines.

The RVS extracurricular program consists of the following sports:

- Grade Six: Introductory Soccer, Volleyball and Basketball
- Grade 7/8 Track and Field
- Jr. A Volleyball (more competitive team, with cuts)
- Jr. B Volleyball (all students who try out make the team)
- Jr. A Basketball (more competitive team, with cuts)
- Jr. B Basketball (all students who try out make the team)
- Grade 7/8 Badminton

## Student Assessment and Reporting

The main goal of assessment and student learning is to guide instruction, promote student learning and inform parents. Assessment needs to be ongoing, consistent and accurate for all students utilizing multiple approaches that evaluate student success as a 21<sup>st</sup> century learner.

Formal communication of student achievement occurs at regular intervals with parent/student/teacher conferences and throughout the school year using Real Time Reporting (RTR). This involves both students and parents regularly checking for assessment information and comments on the parent portal of PowerSchool. Teachers will post assessments and comments throughout the year. Teachers in grades K to 8 post assessment information using PowerSchool software. This information is secure and requires a log in name and password available through the office. A web-based Conference Manager is used to book conferences twice per year. Parent participation in the formal student assessment and reporting process is vital; however, your ongoing communication with the teachers throughout the year supports students in their efforts to achieve their very best. A final report card will be available at the end of the school year.

## Homework

Homework can be one way to help develop responsibility and to build important skills such as planning, organizing and self-discipline, particularly in higher grades. However, any internet search of "Research about Homework in Elementary School" will mostly yield links explaining there are few, if any, significant academic benefits in these earlier years. At Bearspaw School we believe after school and weekend hours are important times for extracurricular activities, family time, outdoor time and free, unstructured play. As such, Bearspaw School has adopted the following HOMEWORK POLICY:

- **Aside from year-round Home Reading, practicing basic math facts** (as determined by individual classroom teachers) **and the encouragement to start practicing good organizational and study habits in grade 3 and 4, no additional "homework" will be assigned in Kindergarten through Grade 4.**
- In Grades 5 - 8 students may have classwork to finish, **if their in-class time was not used optimally.** Homework will not be assigned, at the very end of a period, just for "homework's sake" nor will it be assigned as a disciplinary measure. Long-term projects may require on-going planning and attention. Developing organizational and study skills are becoming increasingly important too. **30-60 minutes of homework/studying per night, across all subject areas, is reasonable in grades 5-8. If your child is regularly spending more than this amount of time on homework, please contact your child's teacher to discuss accommodation. Tweens and teens need downtime too.** \*Please note, time children voluntarily spend reading for pleasure is certainly considered downtime!
- Assignments completed at home may only be used as informal assessments. Special projects might be sent home for optional completion (see below).
- On occasion, there may be opportunities for families to complete school related activities at home (often related to a particular theme, unit or upcoming holiday or if your child has been selected as a "Star Student of the Week", etc). These are considered extension assignments and the optional hours spent on these are at a family's

discretion. **Projects will never be assigned during scheduled calendar breaks.** (Thanksgiving / Christmas / February / Easter).

- Parents might request (or sometimes teachers will suggest) ways for students to gain extra practice in a curricular area or with certain skills. These assignments will not be collected for marks and are for use at a family's discretion if a teacher chooses to provide these.
- Regular attendance is important, but **if a family is planning a holiday** outside of a scheduled Bears paw School break please be aware that **teachers will not provide work for students in advance, nor for kids to work on while they're away.** Student assignments and assessments may be modified once they return to school. It is difficult, and somewhat unfair, to expect a student to complete assignments while away without the benefit of necessary resources and/or teacher explanation. Work done outside of school time also cannot be assessed. Students are always encouraged to read and/or keep a personal journal during their time away from school. Traveling itself can be a rich experience full of much learning, on a short-term basis. (Hopefully parents are leaving their work at home too!)

## Fees

School fees are determined by the Board, with a few exceptions such as options and field trips. These fees are set by the school following guidelines provided by the Board. A fee statement is provided early in the school year and is payable upon receipt. In the event of financial hardship, special arrangements such as monthly payments can be arranged through the school's Secretary of Accounts. A Waiver Application Form is also available yet only for School Established Optional Course Fees. Upon receipt by the school principal of Form AF5105 Waiver Application, parents of students who provide a copy of Goods and Services Tax (GST) credit notice with the names of dependent children listed, will qualify to have their fees waived. The deadline for submission of Form AF5105 Waiver Application to the school principal is June 30 of the current school year. Please check the school website for further information and for a summary of fees under Our School – School Fees.

All school payments MUST be made using the School Cash Online (SCO) site. Please contact our Business Secretary, Michelle de Beurs, if you require assistance with SCO.

## School Policy Statement on Collection of Fees

Fees are important to the operation of a school. We always appreciate the prompt payment of all fees as they are invoiced. To ensure we have a fair process by which we collect fees, the following procedure has been put into place:

Step One: [00] General notice of fee amounts for the school year are provided to parents in the fall and posted on the school's website.

Step Two: [00] An official invoice is distributed, by the middle of October, to each household indicating the specific amount owing and the due date of payment for each child attending Bears paw School.

Step Three: [00] Reminders of fees will be on the Friday Fan Out which is emailed to all parents weekly.

Step Four: [00] Outstanding fee invoices will be mailed to all parent(s) in January or February.

Step Five: [00] Follow-up communication in April or May with the parent(s) by email and/or phone will be made discussing the outstanding fees. The reminder will state the date unpaid fees will be sent to RVS for collections.

Step Six: A list of outstanding fees is submitted to RVS in May or June for collections.

Student accounts must be **in good standing** for the child to participate in extra-curricular activities for which there is a fee. This statement is included on all invoices and is enforced by the teachers and coaches.

## **Textbooks**

Older students may be assigned textbooks which must be returned in good condition. Your child will be responsible for any lost or damaged textbooks assigned. Textbooks are very expensive. Students are strongly encouraged to keep track and care of their textbooks as parents are usually unpleasantly surprised at the cost of repair or replacement. Each year, textbooks and library books are checked, and invoices sent home when necessary.

## **Equipment**

Students are allowed use of equipment as it pertains to their studies. Use of digital resources such as the computers, internet and cameras are permitted for educational purposes. The proper use and care of this equipment is essential to students' on-going access and use. Inappropriate use will result in loss of privileges.

## **School Cleanliness**

Bears paw is fortunate to have a committed caretaking team. Students are asked to assist in maintaining the cleanliness and appearance of our school and school yard by:

- Eating and drinking in designated areas only
- Disposing of garbage and compostable materials in the receptacles provided
- Using recycling containers
- Picking up litter in and around the school
- Abiding by the school's indoor/outdoor shoe policy

We hope everyone will take pride in our beautiful school!

## **Litterless Lunches and Healthy Eating**

We, at Bears paw School, are making efforts to be environmentally conscious. To reduce waste, we encourage students and parents to pack lunches in reusable containers. Although it is challenging to be completely litterless, a reduction of litter is worthwhile. Also, as a school, we are conscious of balancing healthy eating choices with special treats whenever possible. When bringing in celebratory snacks for birthdays, class parties or other special events, we request that you consider some healthy alternatives. Options such as crackers and cheese, instead of cupcakes and cookies, or veggies and dip, or fruit are great options. We appreciate your consideration in this initiative as healthy eating positively impacts learning.

## **Lockers and Storage of Personal Possessions**

Students in grades six to eight are given access to a locker for storage of their school materials and clothing. Lockers must be kept locked, neat and tidy. Students can use magnetized items on the inside of the locker but are not allowed to use tape or other sticky materials as it damages the finish on the locker. In grade six the school will sell an approved lock to each student that must be used to secure the locker. This lock can be used in grades 6, 7 and 8. When the students leave the school, they take the locks with them. If for some reason they require a new lock, it can be purchased at the school office.

## **Lost and Found**

There are six lost and found drawers located underneath the benches in the commons area. Parents and students are encouraged to check these drawers frequently for lost items. All items not claimed at the end of each term will be packaged and sent to local charity organizations. All small items, money and jewelry should be turned into the office. Please ask at the office if you have lost money, keys or a small item.

## **Dress Code**

Dress code has nothing to do with gender or sexuality, self-expression, respect for your body, or distracting others etc. Dress code is simply to teach expected clothing choices in certain situations/places. For example, while there are no inappropriate garments per se, there are different expectations of what to wear to a wedding, funeral, swimming pool, camping, hanging out at home, a job interview and to school. Every place we go there are expected and unexpected behaviours and every place we go there is expected and unexpected attire. The expected dress code in our school setting, for all genders, includes:

- No clothing which reveals the rear end or chest (middle school kids generally understand a “*No crack front or back*” explanation!) Female staff will enforce this with female students and likewise for male staff and students. If necessary, a student might be asked to put on a hoodie, their gym strip, or find something in the Lost and Found to wear on a short-term basis.
- Slogans on all clothing should be appropriate for a K-8 school setting with no profanities (explicit words or pictures).
- Hats, toques, hoods and bandanas may be worn in classrooms at each teacher’s discretion. Students must remove non-religious headwear while in other school spaces, at the request of any staff member.
- Out of consideration for our caretaking team and keeping our beautiful school clean, we have an indoor-outdoor, two-shoe policy across all grades. Students must ensure indoor footwear is kept clean and dry and is appropriate for PE.
- Students in Grades 6-8 are encouraged to bring a change of clothes, also appropriate for PE. This includes non-marking running shoes, a t-shirt or tank top (adhering to bullets 1 and 2, above) plus shorts, sweatpants or leggings. This is as much about safety as expected attire. This is also a good age to start wearing (and bringing) deodorant as body odour increases in middle school!
- Due to an increase in allergies to scents, we ask that everyone be considerate of students and staff by avoiding the use of perfumes, scented body lotions or sprays and scented hair sprays. Sneezing, difficulty breathing, nausea and headaches are some of the common symptoms that many people experience.

## **ATTENDANCE, LATE ARRIVALS AND EARLY DEPARTURES**

### **Attendance Procedures**

Regular attendance is essential to students’ consistent academic progress.

If your child will be absent, parents are asked to report the absence *in advance* using the student absence reporting system that will let you use the following method:

- Use the SafeArrival website, <https://go.schoolmessenger.com>. The first time you use the website, select Sign Up to create your account. Select Attendance then Report an Absence. This may also be set up as an App on your phone.



If your student is marked absent, or is late, and the absence/tardy hasn't been explained in advance, our SafeArrival system will be able to rapidly contact you by automated phone call, text message, email, or mobile app push notification to get a reason for the absence. This is for the safety of the child. **New in 2024-25, to ensure students are not missing important instruction at the beginning of each class, grade 6-8 teachers will be taking attendance each block. Students who take longer than the minute provided between periods to arrive to their next classroom will be marked "Late" and a SafeArrival call will be automatically initiated.** Calls and contacts will continue until you choose an option to explain the absence or to communicate your child is late to classes. Please help us by ensuring we have your current phone numbers including emergency contacts.

The SafeArrival student absence reporting system is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to make it convenient for you to report future absences.

### **Extended Absences**

Please consider extra holidays during the school year carefully as student achievement may be affected. Teachers are under no obligation to provide instruction or materials for students who miss school due to extended holidays.

### **Arriving Late and Leaving Early**

Students should arrive 5-10 minutes before the first class commences. Late arrivals are disruptive to instruction and do not provide the best start to the day for your child. Students should be seated and ready to learn in their classroom by 8:20 a.m. Students who arrive after 8:20 a.m. must sign in at the office.

Students are expected to arrive promptly to all classes. Individual incidents of tardiness will be handled by the classroom teachers. Chronic tardiness will be referred to Administration. Since many students are driven to school, parent cooperation with arriving on time to class is essential.

Students leaving school at any time during the day other than regular dismissal must be physically signed out by their own parent or guardian at the office. For security purposes, the school reserves the right to decide if a student can be released to the care of an adult based on permissions and custody orders that may be on record. Parents are asked to ensure our records are up to date including phone numbers. **Parents are also asked to provide written permission, via email, for someone other than the regular adult to pick up your child.**

### **Bearspaw School Grounds, Parking and Drop-Off Area**

In order to reduce the congestion and increase the safety of our students, we respectfully request your assistance with parking and drop off procedures. Please help us to reinforce the following guidelines:

- all vehicle traffic is prohibited on the bus road and in the bus loop
- observe the one-way flow and do-not enter signs as you come into the school parking area
- do not park along the roadway at the entry into the school property, we must maintain a clear entry way for emergency vehicles
- park in designated parking areas only
- when dropping off, please pull forward up to the vehicle in front of you so that vehicles are not trying to parallel park in empty spaces. This allows for a more fluid entry and exit.

**Please note: all students have designated entry doors. These doors open at 8:10. If you drive your child to school, we respectfully request they are not dropped off prior to 8:00.**

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **Illness**

Please do not send your sick child to school as it is hard on your child and may spread germs to others. Bears paw School has a small room in the office known as the infirmary. A student who does not feel well is allowed to lie down in the infirmary for a limited time. If the student does not improve, or has a fever, we will notify parents to pick up the child. Bears paw School reserves the right to call an ambulance if your child appears seriously ill or injured. It is critical that your child's special medical needs are listed on the registration form, and that a current emergency contact other than parents is provided. While we have several staff trained in First Aid, there is not a school nurse assigned to our site.

Students are encouraged to wash hands frequently especially before eating and after using the washroom. Students are discouraged from sharing drinks, lip balms, utensils, etc. to help reduce the spread of germs. Students are also discouraged from sharing toques, hats, combs, brushes etc. to help reduce the transmission of lice. Bears paw School seeks advice from Alberta Health authorities in the event there appears to be an outbreak of infectious conditions and notify families accordingly.

### **Medication, Allergies, and other Medical Conditions**

Bears paw School will NOT issue any medication or provide any medical attention beyond that of first aid treatment. Parents, emergency contacts, or an ambulance will be contacted. Students who require Epi-pens should carry them at all times. Please consider that Bears paw School is allergy aware with a focus on nut allergies. Parents should **not** assume that the school is allergen free. We have requested that nuts not be brought to school, but we **cannot guarantee** that everyone will comply with our request.

Parents of children with severe allergies are strongly encouraged to:

- Secure a medic-alert bracelet for your child
- Educate your child as to safe and unsafe foods and symptoms as well as how to self-administer the (auto-inject) Epi-pen if age appropriate
- Ensure you have discussed the matter with the classroom teacher
- Provide a second Epi-pen to be housed in the school's infirmary, in addition to the one they carry.

Parents are asked to complete the ["Request for Administration of Medication" form](#) if your child has medical conditions of which the school must be aware. Teachers review Epi-pen use for seizures and diabetes with the school nurse each fall.

### **Weather/School Closure**

On days winter weather conditions are too severe, RVS may decide to close schools to keep students and staff safe. While this is rare, it is important families know what will happen and where to go for information.

We consider several factors when closing schools due to weather. These include current and forecasted temperature and wind chill, road conditions, the amount of snow and ice, school building constructions and school location. This decision is made early in the morning before school starts or buses are running. Ultimately, the final decision to send a child to the bus stop or to school rests with parents/guardians.

We inform parents/guardians, staff and media through email. Parents/guardians can also keep an eye on Rocky View Transportation's Late Bus App, the RVS website home page or RVS' Facebook and Twitter accounts for information about closures. If you have not heard from us and you do not see a school closure announcement, schools are open!

### **Bussing**

At one point or another all students will ride a bus, whether it is for field trips, or on a daily basis as a means for transportation to and from school. All students, therefore, are required to be familiar with basic bussing rules and regulations. Students should be dressed for the weather in case of a bus breakdown. Once on the bus students should sit in their assigned seat, face toward the driver at all times, and keep their voices down so the driver can concentrate

on the road. The driver's instructions must be listened to and obeyed at all times. Materials carried on to the bus must be of a size and nature that allows them to be held by the student without endangering others. Parents may access further information about RVS Transportation at: <https://www.rockyview.ab.ca/schools/busing-transportation>

## **Recess**

Whenever possible, recess will be taken outdoors, as usual. During times of extreme cold weather (wind chill will be taken into account) recess time outside may be shortened or cancelled. If outside recess is cancelled, students will be asked to play and have quiet time in their rooms or the Commons area.

As the decision to stay indoors is made on a day-to-day basis, please ensure your child is dressed properly to go outside in a variety of weather conditions.

If your child is healthy enough to be at school, they are considered healthy enough to participate in recess. There is not adequate supervision to accommodate students simply staying in, by family request.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

Emergency preparedness drills are required at regular intervals during the school year. These drills are an important safety precaution and everyone must follow procedures closely. The teacher in each classroom knows the specific instructions for emergencies. An evacuation team is trained to function in various roles in the event of an emergency. Students who do not cooperate in an emergency drill will have disciplinary consequences. The primary designated evacuation site is Bearspaw Lifestyle Centre. The secondary evacuation site is Cochrane High School in Cochrane. School lockdown procedures are also practiced for the unlikely event of an intruder. Parents will be required to show identification at the evacuation site for your children to be released to your care. Further information about Rocky View Schools' "Hour Zero" protocols may be found at: <https://www.rockyview.ab.ca/about-rvs/emergency-response>

## **STUDENT CONDUCT AND BEARSPAW SCHOOL DISCIPLINE CYCLE**

The role of the student is outlined in the Education Act (Section 31):

A student, as a partner in education, has the responsibility to

- (a) attend school regularly and punctually,
- (b) be ready to learn and actively engage in and diligently pursue the student's education,
- (c) ensure that the student's conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging,
- (d) respect the rights of others in the school,
- (e) refrain from, report and not tolerate bullying or bullying behaviour directed toward others in the school, whether or not it occurs within the school building, during the school day or by electronic means,
- (f) comply with the rules of the school and the policies of the board,
- (g) co-operate with everyone authorized by the board to provide education programs and other services,
- (h) be accountable to the student's teachers and other school staff for the student's conduct, and
- (i) positively contribute to the student's school and community.

## **ROCKY VIEW SCHOOLS STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**

With an overarching theme of "Everyone is Welcome", another of the ways Bearspaw students will thrive is through our use of Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS is an evidence-based framework for impacting student outcomes every day. It is a way to support everyone to create the kinds of schools where all staff and students feel safe and are successful. PBIS is not a package or program but is a commitment to responding to student

behaviour responsively, through predicting, preventing, teaching, and responding to student need. When the key features of the PBIS framework are implemented:

- students experience and achieve improved social and academic outcomes
- schools experience reduced exclusionary and punitive discipline practices
- school staff feel more effective

### **Bears paw Schools' PBIS Matrix:**

#### Be Kind

- Help Others
- Be Kind Online
- Everyone is Welcome

#### Be Safe

- Keep Personal Space
- Move Safely
- Follow Directions

#### Be Responsible

- Be On Time & Prepared
- Be a Problem Solver
- Be an Active Learner

#### Be Respectful

- Have Property Pride
- Sound Check (volume that fits environment)
- School Friendly Language

In support of positive student conduct we take a two-fold approach. The first aspect is proactive: We work towards developing good character in our students such that they recognize right from wrong and make decisions that support respectful behaviour. Students are supported in learning problem solving skills, critical thinking skills, social skills and empathy. The school's Child Development Advisor (CDA) is actively involved in promoting programs along these themes. The second aspect is disciplinary: We work towards clear and consistent expectations and consequences.

### **Response to Inappropriate Behaviours:**

Minor incidents are handled at the time, on the spot, usually by the classroom teacher. The student is cooperative and remorseful. We generally begin with simple reminders, and then progress to structured problem-solving, if necessary.

Incidents that are deemed a concern, repetitive or handled inappropriately by the student may require more involvement. Documentation may be needed along with consequences. The parent may or may not be contacted depending on the situation.

Incidents that are viewed as more serious, chronic or handled inappropriately by the student usually require an investigation; witnesses are called; and parents are contacted. These types of behaviours involve school suspensions for one class, a part of the day, a full day, or multiple day and may be in-school or out-of-school.

When investigating incidents, we:

- seek to understand what happened rather than assuming.

- are effective, more than efficient, thus taking the time needed for all parties to be heard, looking to understand as accurate a picture of the situation as possible.
- keep every student's dignity and our dignity intact.

Our problem-solving structure includes the following:

- Taking adequate time to clarify the incident and the problem.
- Brain-storming solutions with students / parents / teachers when appropriate.
- Choosing an appropriate solution.
- Scheduling a time to follow up on how things are going and/or mediation through our CDA

Although each situation is judged on its own circumstances, the above guidelines help all parties understand and assess the nature of the misconduct. There are behaviors that are unacceptable, including violence, possession, or use of drugs and/or alcohol, possession or use of weapons, and direct defiance of an adult. In the case of these behaviors, our progressive discipline model could include, as a minimum, removal from classroom or playground or, as a maximum, out of school suspension of five days or recommendation of expulsion to the school board.

**Harassment and Bullying**

Harassment and bullying are complex behaviours common in society but are different than conflict issues. It is important to note the difference between conflict and harassment / bullying. Conflict is a disagreement and solving it is the responsibility of all parties involved. Teaching students to manage conflict is a life skill. Harassment and bullying are identified as **targeted, on-going behaviours** intended to harm, humiliate or exclude another. Although we try to educate our students regarding all aggressive or mean behaviour, when it is targeted and repeated over longer periods of time, we consider it bullying and make even greater efforts to eliminate it.

Much work is required every year with students and parents to keep a heightened awareness about harassment and bullying and its negative effects, as well as understanding the difference between true bullying and peer conflict. As needed, investigations are handled through our discipline cycle based on the situation, including evidence available, attitude of the student and severity of the behaviour.

**Student Conduct in the Digital World**

Electronic and digital communication has created a set of responsibilities that our students need to demonstrate. The use of personal digital devices at school, on school property, or at school sponsored activities is subject to the same standards of conduct and consequences as any other behaviour. All use of digital recordings should be with honourable intent and with good conscience. The RVS Responsible Use Agreement must be signed annually.

At no time should any photos, voice recordings or transmission of personal information, including social media, be made without the **knowledge and permission** of all persons potentially involved or affected by such information. The school reserves the right to confiscate digital devices if found to have been used in contravention of school rules and expectations. We encourage the use of personal digital devices for appropriate learning purposes. However, the school assumes no liability for lost, stolen or broken digital devices students may bring to school.

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**We hope you find this Handbook informative. Your thoughts and feedback are greatly appreciated.**