

## **Discrimination Protection Policy**

The safety and wellbeing of children, staff and everyone in our community is very important to us and students and staff need to be protected from physical abuse, verbal abuse, neglect, harm and threat of harm. The school is committed to creating an atmosphere which protects people from discrimination and intimidation and provides all students and staff with a safe and caring environment.

The school will continually develop strategies to allow students and staff to feel valued, included, respected and connected within the school community. This includes the protection of people's physical safety and social connectedness as well as protection from harassment for any reason including their gender, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression.

**At the heart of the Bioregional Education Association is a philosophy of non-discrimination. This is articulated in several places, and summarized below.**

### **Philosophy and Principles**

Upon the founding of the school we had the goal to arrive, through discussion, at a consensus of all members of the school community on a set of principles which would create a nonviolent, peaceful, cooperative learning environment. During many discussions involving students, staff, and volunteers such a consensus was reached on the following principles:

**No violence,  
Respect all life,  
Respect diversity,  
Respect all people,  
Respect the learning environment,  
Use things with care,  
Enjoy learning,  
Help other people learn,  
Be prepared.**

### **Constitution**

An unalterable provision of the Constitution of the Bioregional Education Association under the Society's Act is section 3: *The nature of the society shall be a non-partisan organization which welcomes racial, cultural and religious diversity, and families of every composition. Any profits or accretions to the society shall be used for promoting its purposes. This provision is unalterable.*

## **Nonviolence Policies**

Throughout our policies you will find reference to nonviolence. Our commitment is to work towards a peaceful community atmosphere in all contexts. To this end, staff are continually trained and students are mentored to create peace, to solve conflicts, to offer constructive feedback, and to use non-judgmental language. This is an ongoing process and commitment.

The school takes a relationship approach to all behaviour observed and reported. With this approach we are able to create the climate and culture of acceptance which in turn prevents incidences of targeted intimidation and discrimination. We take pride in this nonviolent approach, and expect staff and students to participate in the relationship building required to preserve diversity and manage conflict.

Families and members of staff should be aware that this does not mean that there will be no conflict. In fact, conflict is a healthy part of student and staff life, and is embraced. There is no diversity without conflict. It is the relationships we build that allow us to learn to deal peacefully with conflict and diversity within an atmosphere of acceptance. Learning to constructively deal with conflict is an explicit goal of Oak and Orca programs and staff training.

### **Accountability** (See the document entitled “Behaviour Guidelines”.)

Nonviolence policies are expected to be followed to the best of everyone’s abilities and each person is responsible to seek support in difficult or challenging situations. Students and staff will be held to account for any language or behaviour that could lead to teasing, taunting, coercion, intimidation, violence, or discrimination.

The consequences of such language or behaviour exhibited by a student will take into account the individual circumstances of the student including their age, maturity level, and any special needs. Students are required to follow behaviour guidelines when under the jurisdiction of the School. Students will also be held to account if they are a bystander to any such behaviour, and do not take action against it. Required measures will be taken to prevent retaliation against students, staff, or community members who report violations of policy.

Students will also be held to account for interacting with other members of our community outside of the school jurisdiction, either personally or online, if the interaction results in concerns that are brought to school staff. Parents and guardians will be involved and will be expected to take responsibility for the actions of a student while under their jurisdiction.