



EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# Student Rights and Responsibilities

2024–2025

## **Highlands School**

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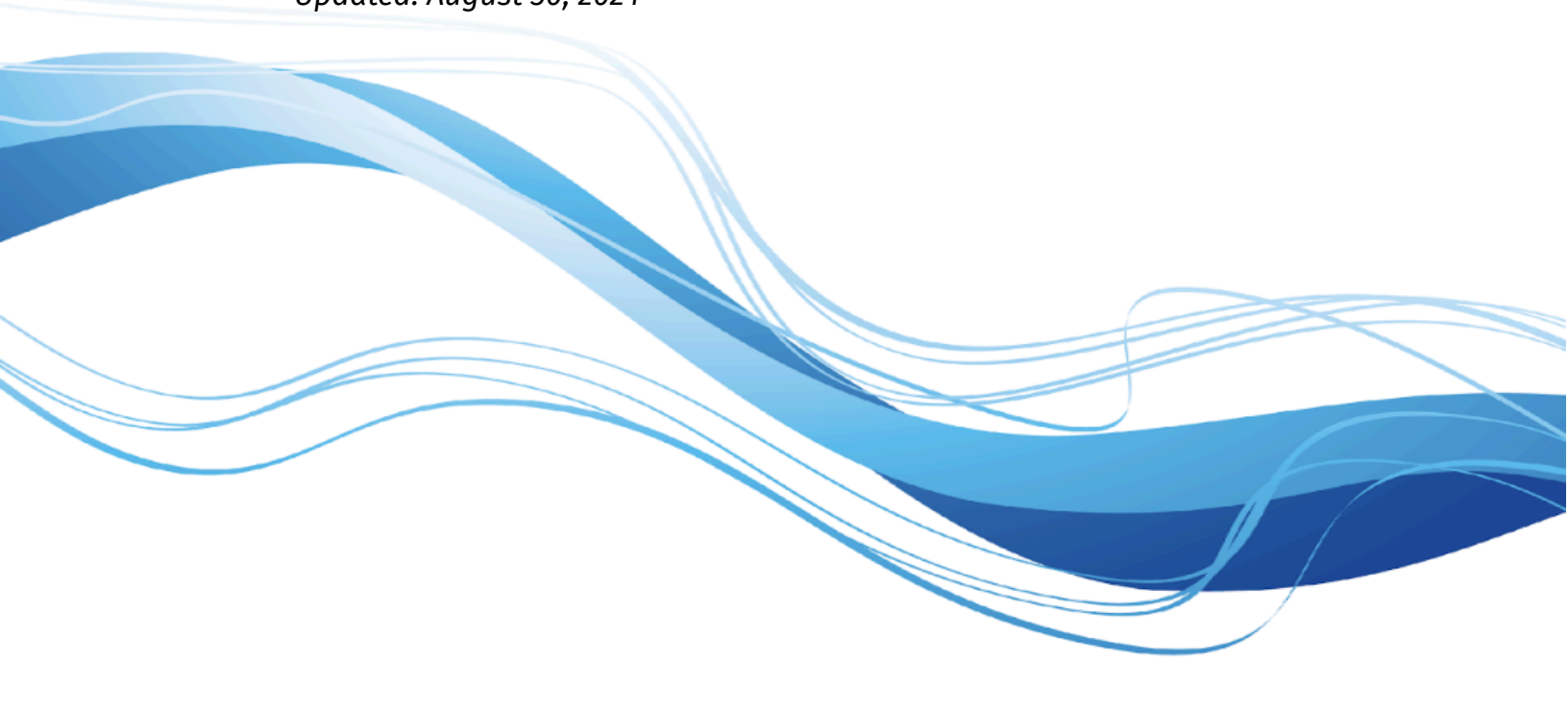
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## Our Commitment to High Quality Learning Environments

At Edmonton Public Schools, we are deeply committed to the success and well-being of our students. Each student deserves a welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy learning environment that supports their learning, respects diversity, and nurtures a sense of belonging.

As a Division, we have established clear behaviour expectations for all students, from Kindergarten to Grade 12. The expectations are outlined in the Board's [Student Behaviour and Conduct Policy](#) which was developed in consultation with students, parents, staff and community members. The policy outlines the rights and responsibilities of students and our expectations for student conduct, and the potential responses when students demonstrate unacceptable behaviour.

The role of parents and families in their child's education plays a vital role in promoting positive student behaviour. Partnerships with families continue to make a difference for our students and staff. By working together, we will ensure our students learn the importance of good character and conduct, and our schools will remain safe and secure places to learn and thrive.



Julie Kusiek  
Board Chair

## Student Success and Safety—Our Highest Priorities

It is our shared responsibility to ensure that each student can learn and realize their potential within a safe and caring learning environment. In addition to teaching the necessary learning outcomes, our schools are places where students can develop the character and skills needed to become responsible, respectful, compassionate and successful citizens.

School staff use the *Education Act*, S.A. 2012, c.E-03, Board Policy [HG.BP—Student Behaviour and Conduct](#) and Administrative Regulation [HG.AR – Student Behaviour and Conduct](#) as the basis for creating this **Student Rights and Responsibilities** document. This document is designed to communicate expectations, and balances the overarching rights and responsibilities that are communicated in our policy with the unique context of each school. The expectations and processes outlined in this document are implemented by principals in collaboration with school staff, parents and local communities.

Ensuring each student can thrive in a safe, productive and welcoming learning environment is essential to our work in improving student achievement and high school completion rates. By working together to promote positive attitudes and responsible, respectful behaviour in our schools, we believe students will receive the greatest benefit during their educational journey.



Darrel Robertson  
Superintendent of Schools

## Supporting Student Success

Members of the Edmonton Public Schools community, including students, parents, staff and trustees, have a shared responsibility to help students be successful in school. Safety and well-being is fundamental to our students thriving as learners, and experiencing success and fulfillment both at school and in their lives. This Student Rights and Responsibilities document has been created to communicate clear expectations for how our students are expected to behave in order to ensure they become the best students and citizens they can be.

### **Parents support their child's success and positive behaviour by:**

- taking an active role in their child's personal and academic success
- reviewing expectations outlined in this document with their child and helping them develop the skills required to meet expectations set out by the school, the Division, and the Province.
- helping them to attend school regularly and punctually
- encouraging and modeling collaborative, positive and respectful relationships with others in the school community
- contributing to a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment
- reporting to the school any circumstances which may impact student safety
- talking with their child(ren) about the potential risks and benefits of technology, responsible internet and social media use (including online profiles, group chats, and chats on gaming consoles), and the importance of respecting privacy and protecting personal information in age-appropriate ways.

### **Students are responsible for their behaviour and effort, and are expected to:**

- contribute to a welcoming, caring, inclusive, respectful and safe learning environment that commits to anti-racism and equity
- learn, practice and demonstrate positive personal and interpersonal skills and attributes
- use their abilities and talents to gain maximum learning benefit from their school experience
- attend school regularly and punctually
- be accountable for behaviour which impacts others in the school, whether or not the behaviour occurs within the school building or during the school day or by electronic means

### **School staff will help your child succeed by:**

- providing a welcoming, caring, respectful, inclusive and safe learning environment that respects diversity, commits to anti-racism and equity, and fosters a sense of belonging
- ensuring that students and parents understand the school's expectations for student behaviour
- establishing supports and processes at the school to proactively guide positive student behaviour
- helping students develop and practice the skills and attributes to meet these expectations
- working with students, parents and other school staff to address behaviour concerns, including implementing appropriate responses to address inappropriate student behaviour

To support a shared understanding of the language and intent of this document, refer to the [glossary](#) for a definition of terms.

## Our Belief and Commitment

### At Highlands School we believe:

- that the core values our school community has agreed upon (kindness, creativity and community) should guide our decision-making.
- in fostering an environment that is kind, respectful, inclusive where all students can thrive and be successful.
- that our diversity is our strength, and we recognize and embrace our shared responsibility to create a caring, inclusive community that does not tolerate racism or discrimination.
- that we all have a role to play to ensure that everyone feels safe, respected and that they belong in our community.
- in a restorative approach to maintaining a safe community. Highlands School staff believe in mentoring student behaviour by teaching responsibility and creating a caring school community. In a positive way, we offer opportunities to repair harm to each other and our community when and how appropriate.
- in ensuring a safe, positive, respectful, and productive school climate and culture, where high expectations are set for academic achievement and behaviour. This Rights and Responsibilities document provides students and parents with expectations for how to be successful and safe at Highlands.

### Highlands School Philosophy:

At Highlands School, we believe the pathway to academic success, well-being, and mental health of each of our students is paved with kindness, community and creativity. We value kindness by creating a learning space that welcomes all students and provides them opportunities to learn about themselves and the world around them, develop competencies and see themselves as agents of change. We value community by promoting a sense of belonging, celebrating our diversity and fostering strong relationships within and between students, staff, caregivers, partners and the greater school community. We value creativity by embracing risk-taking in pursuit of excellence, and learning in, through and about the arts.

## Rights and Responsibilities

Our Division recognizes the following fundamental rights and responsibilities:

All students have the right to be treated with dignity, respect and fairness by other staff and students.

Students, parents, staff and trustees have a shared responsibility to create and support welcoming, caring, respectful, inclusive and safe learning environments.

All members of our school community are expected to respect diversity and not engage in any form of bullying, harassment, threats, intimidation or discrimination on the basis of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status or sexual orientation.

Students and parents have a right to be informed about Division and school expectations for student behaviour. To support this right, all schools' Student Rights and Responsibilities documents will be posted on SchoolZone and on school websites.

### Anti-Racism and Equity

All members of the Edmonton Public Schools community:

- have the right to learn and work in an environment that:
  - is free of discrimination, prejudice, and racism
  - recognizes diversity as a strength
  - supports each individual to be included and feel represented in their greater school community, and
- have the responsibility to:
  - demonstrate respect for diverse cultural perspectives, traditions, languages, beliefs and values
  - learn and work together as a part of the broader school community to end racism and discrimination
  - report, not participate in, and not tolerate acts of racism or discrimination.

These rights and responsibilities are communicated in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and the *Education Act* and are reinforced in Division policies and regulations which are publicly available and include [AE.BP—Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments](#), [HG.BP—Student Behaviour and Conduct](#), [HG.AR—Student Behaviour and Conduct](#), [HFA.AR—Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#) and [HAAB.BP – Anti-Racism and Equity](#).

At Highlands School, everyone in our school community has the right to learn and work in an environment that is respectful, inclusive, safe, healthy and focused on learning and success. In order to preserve these rights, students must also be aware of their individual responsibilities.

- Our students have the right to be treated with dignity, respect and fairness by other students and staff.
- Every student at Highlands School has the right to belong, to be respected, and to feel safe and included in a welcoming community.
- Rights and responsibilities of students include:
  - I have the **right** to learn and grow. It is my **responsibility** to be prepared for class, listen to instructions, work quietly, raise my hand if I have a question or concern, and to complete my assignments. I will cooperate, participate and do my best.
  - I have the **right** to hear and be heard. It is my **responsibility** to respect the right of others to hear and be heard.
  - Together, we recognize and respect the **right** of all students to learn and teachers to teach. We all have a **responsibility** to follow the rules at Highlands so everyone is safe and ready to learn.
  - I have a **right** to be treated with dignity and respect in school. It is my **responsibility** to treat others with honour and polite consideration. I will not laugh at, tease, or put down other people.
- Every person has a **right** to an environment that is free of racism or discrimination. Each of us has the **responsibility** to ensure that our school community, and our personal actions, demonstrate a commitment to kindness, equity and anti-racism.
- Students are responsible for ensuring that their conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.
- Students are responsible for their behaviour, whether or not it occurs within the school building, during the school day or by electronic means.
- Students have the responsibility to demonstrate honesty and academic integrity and to follow the rules and expectations of Highlands School to ensure our school is a great learning environment for everyone.
- At Highlands School, students show respect to others and take responsibility for their own actions, and how their actions affect others.

## Student Behaviour Expectations

To ensure that Highlands School is a positive learning environment for everyone, all students are expected to comply with expectations set by our school Division and mandated by the *Education Act*, as well as school rules which are in place for the benefit of all members of our school community. These expectations apply to all students in the school community, including while learning and engaging with others both in-person and online.

Board Policy [HG.BP—Student Behaviour and Conduct](#), and Administrative Regulation [HG.AR—Student Behaviour and Conduct](#) outline that students are expected to behave in accordance with section 31 of the *Education Act* which states that, a student, as a partner in education, has the responsibility to:

- attend school regularly and punctually,
- be ready to learn and actively engage in and diligently pursue the student's education,
- ensure the student's conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning, environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging,
- respect the rights of others in the school,
- 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,
- comply with rules of the school and the policies of the Board,
- cooperate fully with everyone authorized by the Board to provide education programs and other services,
- be accountable to the student's teachers and other school staff for the student's conduct, and
- positively contribute to the student's school and community.

Furthermore, students are expected to:

- resolve conflict or seek assistance to resolve conflict in a peaceful, safe, and non-threatening manner that is conducive to learning and growth. Strategies for addressing conflict between students may include counselling, mediation, or forms of restorative practice.
- use school and personal technology (which may include artificial intelligence) appropriately and ethically, and in alignment with teacher, school, Division and provincial expectations.
- ensure that they conduct themselves with academic integrity and refrain from and report all incidents of academic misconduct including, but not limited to, cheating and plagiarizing.

### Regular Attendance – It's the Law

Regular attendance is strongly linked to student academic success and a student's sense of belonging at school. The *Education Act* reminds parents and students that students are expected to attend school and be punctual every day. Students are only considered to be excused from attending school if they must be away due to:

- sickness or other unavoidable cause
- the day being recognized as a religious holiday by the religious denomination that the child belongs to
- suspension or expulsion
- an exemption from compulsory attendance granted by the Board for a defined period of time

**Expectations for Student Attire**

At Edmonton Public Schools, students are expected to dress in a manner that reflects a welcoming, respectful, inclusive, safe and healthy learning environment. School expectations for student attire take into account a student's right to fairness, dignity and respect, and will not discriminate against students based on race, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, socio-economic status, or body type. Some examples of welcome attire are durags, turbans, hijabs and burkas.

Student safety and well-being are our highest priorities. Students are also expected to refrain from wearing, carrying, or displaying any clothing or accessories which pose a safety hazard. Students are not permitted to wear lanyards around their neck.

**Physical Education for Junior High students:** Please ensure to dress appropriately for physical activity on the days that they are scheduled to have PE classes. This includes shoes with non-marking soles for the gym.

**Student Responsibilities in Relation to Public Health**

The Division's first priority is always to ensure the health and well-being of students and staff. Students are expected to abide by protocols and expectations that are established at the school, Division, or provincial level for K-12 education, in relation to public health.

These expectations will be communicated to students, parents, and staff by the school administration in a timely manner, and may be updated over the course of the school year in relation to a public health concern.



## Responsible and Ethical Use of Technology

Our Division is committed to assisting students to become ethical, informed digital citizens. We strive to ensure that appropriate and responsible technology use supports high quality teaching and learning, while also ensuring a respectful, inclusive, and safe learning and working environment.

Technology refers to any hardware, applications (which may include artificial intelligence), networking and communications equipment used in the Division, including those that are personally owned. Division technology is intended for educational purposes and cannot be used for purposes that are illegal, unethical, disrespectful, hateful, inappropriate, or that cause harm.

### 2024-2025 Update - Student Use of Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media

To maximize student engagement in learning, support student mental health, reduce opportunities for cyberbullying, and mitigate the negative impacts of excessive exposure to social media, the Government of Alberta has established standards restricting student use of personal mobile devices and access to social media.

At a minimum:

- Students will be required to have devices powered off and stored out of sight during instructional time.
- Students will not be able to access social media platforms on Division networks and devices.

Personal mobile devices include smartphones, cellphones, smart watches, tablets and laptops. Students are expected to respect and abide by classroom, school, Division and provincial expectations for the use of personal mobile devices and social media.

[Read more](#) about the province's standards.

In support of the newly established standards, EPSB filters social media sites so students are not able to access them using the school's network. If a student chooses to access social media sites using their own cellular data, families need to be aware that additional data charges may incur. The social media sites that are currently restricted for student access include, but are not limited to; Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, SnapChat, X (Twitter), Be Real, Discord, Threads, WeChat, and Pinterest.

A school authority is required to allow for the following limited use exceptions:

- Limited use of personal mobile devices must be permitted, as determined by a principal or equivalent, for health or medical reasons or to support special learning needs;
  - In Edmonton Public Schools these requests would be supported by a student's medical management plan (MMP) or a student's Individual Program Plan (IPP);
- Limited use of personal mobile devices may be permitted for educational or other purposes, as determined by a principal or equivalent;
- Limited access to social media may be permitted, as determined by a principal or equivalent.

To access any of these exemptions, parents must first speak to school administration for potential authorized access.

Pursuant to the *Education Act*, students are accountable for their behaviour when using technology, including when a student's online behaviour outside of the school building or beyond the school day impacts others in the school community. A range of

responses as outlined in [HG.BP – Student Behaviour and Conduct](#) and [HG.AR – Student Behaviour and Conduct](#), including loss of technology privileges, may be put in place to address unacceptable use of technology.

**As digital citizens, students have the following responsibilities:**

- **Demonstrate respect and integrity**
  - understand that expectations for conduct and academic integrity while online, including when using personal devices and outside of school hours, are consistent with school and Division expectations (for example, students should only join online classes in which they are enrolled)
  - use good judgment and participate appropriately in online environments such as meetings, chats, and other applications, and when posting or sharing digital content
  - communicate in a manner that is appropriate, respectful and inclusive at all times
- **Be safe and secure**
  - protect passwords and personal information of self and others including photos, name, age, address and other contact information
  - students must ensure they log in only to their assigned EPSB account, and log off devices and meetings when finished
  - obtain permission before downloading files, including games, music, and movies
  - report, and refrain from searching, viewing, downloading, or sharing, any illegal or inappropriate content
  - do not record or share any audio or video of in-person or online classrooms or other learning activities
  - obtain consent before photographing, recording, or sharing a photo or recording of another person
- **Respect and protect property**
  - demonstrate proper care and security of personal and Division technology
  - students are responsible for the care and security of personal mobile devices brought to school.
  - should school staff take possession of a student's personal device, staff will ensure that student devices in staff's possession are stored securely.
  - the Division will not be responsible for any issues related to the safety, security, loss, repair, or replacement of students' personal devices, even if these devices are confiscated as part of disciplinary actions. This means that if a device is lost, damaged, or stolen while in the school's possession, the school will not cover any related costs or damages.

**In addition to the Division and provincial expectations outlined above, students at Highlands School are expected to adhere to the Highlands Personal Mobile Device (PMD) Policy:**

- **Storage of Devices:**
  - Upon arrival at school, all students are required to store their mobile devices and wireless earphones in their lockers.
  - Junior High students may retrieve their devices during the lunch period, but must return them to their lockers before afternoon classes begin.
  - Students in elementary will remain unable to use them during this time as per our previous expectations.
  - Devices are not to be used in hallways, classrooms, or any other areas of the school during instructional time.

## Unacceptable Behaviour

Any behaviour, whether or not it occurs on school property, or within the school day, which disrupts the educational atmosphere of the school or which interferes with the rights of others to learn, to be respected or to feel safe is unacceptable.

As outlined in Board Policy [HG.BP—Student Behaviour and Conduct](#), and Administrative Regulation [HG.AR—Student Behaviour and Conduct](#) and supported by the *Education Act*, unacceptable behaviour includes, but is not limited to:

- behaviours that interfere with the learning of others and/or the school environment
- behaviours that create unsafe conditions
- acts of bullying, harassment, threats, or intimidations whether it be in person, indirectly, or by electronic means
- physical violence
- retribution against any person who has intervened to prevent or report bullying or any other incident or safety concern
- possession, use, or distribution of substances restricted by federal, provincial, municipal, Division or school authorities
- any illegal activity such as:
  - possession, use, or distribution of illegal substances
  - possession of a weapon or use of a weapon (or replica) to threaten, intimidate or harm others
  - possession, use, display, or distribution of offensive messages, videos or images
  - theft or possession of stolen property
- any breach of rules and expectations established by government orders, Division administrative regulations or school-based code of conduct
- failure to comply with *Education Act*, section 31 regarding student responsibilities

**Bullying and Conflict**

Bullying is defined in the *Education Act* as repeated and hostile or demeaning behaviour by an individual in the school community where the behaviour is intended to cause harm, fear or distress to one or more other individuals in the school community, including psychological harm or harm to an individual's reputation. Bullying also includes the distribution of an intimate image of another person knowing that the person depicted in the image did not consent to the distribution, or being reckless as to whether or not that person consented to the distribution.

**Bullying** can take different forms:

- physical (e.g., pushing, hitting)
- verbal (e.g., name-calling, threats)
- social (e.g., exclusion, rumours)
- electronic (e.g., using technology to harass or threaten)

**Conflict** occurs when there is a breakdown in relationships between individuals that results from a disagreement or misunderstanding. While conflicts may require adult intervention, they are considered to be a natural part of how students learn to navigate relationships.

All students are expected to 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. Students are also expected to resolve conflict or seek assistance to resolve conflict in a peaceful, safe, and non-threatening manner that is conducive to learning and growth. School staff can help address conflict between students using strategies that may include counselling, mediation, consequences and/or forms of restorative practice.

## School Responses to Unacceptable Behaviour

Our Division acknowledges the importance of responsive discipline which involves a continuum of interventions that aim to build a sense of community in schools, facilitate healthy relationships, support behavioural changes, repair harm, and hold students accountable.

Edmonton Public Schools' Board Policy [HG.BP—Student Behaviour and Conduct](#), and Administrative Regulation [HG.AR—Student Behaviour and Conduct](#) outline the following:

Unacceptable behaviour may be grounds for disciplinary action which provides the student with an opportunity for critical learning and reflection in the areas of personal accountability and responsibility, the development of empathy, as well as communication, conflict resolution, and social skills development.

The specific circumstances of the situation and of the student are taken into account when determining appropriate responses to unacceptable behaviour.

When a student engages in unacceptable behaviour, consequences and responses may include, but are not limited to:

- temporary assignment of a student to an alternate supervised area within the school
- temporary assignment of a student to an alternate learning location
- short term removal of privileges including access to technology
- interventions such as positive behaviour supports, contracts, counselling, restorative practices
- replacement or reimbursement for loss of, or damage to property
- in-school or out-of-school suspension
- referral to Attendance Board
- recommendation for expulsion

At Highlands School, we are committed to ensuring that our school is a safe and productive learning environment. Where necessary, interventions or disciplinary action may be used to address unacceptable behaviour by students. We approach student behaviour and conduct in a way that supports positive student behaviour and personal development by managing discipline through proactive, responsive, and restorative strategies.

These strategies include, but are not limited to:

- conversation in the context of the classroom, that usually involve the classroom teacher or other classroom staff
- where appropriate, restorative conversations between students will be facilitated by staff
- in more serious concerns that involve safety, or repeated concerns, administrative staff (e.g. principal, assistant principal, etc.) may be included for restorative conversations or meetings · responses to student behaviours, including consequences or interventions, will take into account a student's age, maturity and individual circumstances
- the responses to behaviour of one student will not be discussed with a parent/family member of another child
- where appropriate, parents/guardians are included in the process of conversation and consequence, and will be informed of consequences and interventions for their child, with the understanding that school administration is responsible for final decisions
- age appropriate responses to unacceptable behaviour may include: recess spent walking outside with an adult, time spent working on academic tasks at the office area or in another classroom, in-school or out-of-school suspension
- processes are in place for documenting student reflection pages, as well as log entries, letters of suspension and formal communication with parents
- recommendation for expulsion

Our goal is to support students to become positive, productive citizens within and outside of our school walls. Although staff focus on encouraging and celebrating the positive, there are times when students will make choices that are inappropriate or unsafe. When this happens, we will work with students, parents and families to respond to unacceptable behaviour in a way that helps students to learn from their mistakes, and to help all students continue to feel safe and respected at Highlands School.

Edmonton Public Schools is helping to shape the future in every one of our classrooms. We're focused on ensuring each student learns to their full potential and develops the ability, passion and imagination to pursue their dreams and contribute to their community.



**[epsb.ca](https://epsb.ca)**