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Principal: Mr. M. Nederveen

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Caring, Respectful and Safe Teaching and Learning Policy

Foundation, Purpose, and Aims

Our Foundation

Covenant Canadian Reformed School is a parentally-run school, established in 1977 by members of the Canadian Reformed Church of Neerlandia who desired for their children to be educated in the fear of the Lord. Seeing a real need for a school that was distinctively Christian and Biblical in every way, these members established a school society and elected a parental board to operate and maintain Covenant. When we look back at how God has blessed and established Covenant we are amazed! What treasures God has given us – the Word of God and a supporting community and a growing student body that strives to live by that Word.

Behind what can be seen at the school every day – the building, the books, the students, the teachers – is a supportive community. Parents and members of the school society make significant sacrifices so that children can be educated here at Covenant Canadian Reformed School.

Covenant continues to be one of the means by which Christian parents pass on their Christian values and beliefs to their children. As a Christian community made up of Christian individuals our identity is found primarily in Christ, and thus our Christian faith permeates all aspects of Covenant Canadian Reformed School – including classroom instruction, school clubs, and the way in which we seek to love, serve, and respect others. Continuity between home, school, and church in both the purpose and direction of education is sought and recognized as essential at Covenant.

Our Purpose

Parents are the primary authorities of their children – also in the area of education God has given primary authority of children to parents (see Genesis 18:19, Deut. 6, Psalm 78, Prov. 22:6, Eph.6:1-4). As such our purpose here at Covenant is to assist parents in educating their children in a Reformed Christian manner. The basis of our education and instruction is the infallible Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity namely the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dort.

General Aims of Education at Covenant Canadian Reformed School

- To assist the parents in their task of bringing up their children in the fear of the Lord, the only true source of knowledge and wisdom.
- To assist the parents in revealing and declaring to their children their Triune God, who wishes to be known by them so that they may rightly confess, serve, and honour Him in their given office.
- To assist the parents in enabling and encouraging children to fulfill their cultural tasks to the best of their ability, both now and later in life.
- To assist the parents in the instruction of their children in these important areas of knowledge: Bible and confessions, Church History, arts, Canadian and world studies, language, mathematics, physical education and science.
- To assist parents in teaching their children to discern between truth and falsehood, light and darkness, by recognizing and evaluating philosophies and ideologies through the lens of God's infallible and inerrant Word.
- To assist the parents in equipping their children in their lifelong calling as prophet, priest and king.

Principles for Implementation of Safe Teaching and Learning Policy

While holding to the aforementioned foundational statements, purpose, and aims the Canadian Reformed School Society of Neerlandia is committed to continue to implement measures that will:

1. Ensure policies, procedures and programs help create a safe and caring learning and teaching environment in the school.
2. Define appropriate and inappropriate behaviours, language, and actions in order to prevent bullying, violence, prejudice, intimidation and harassment through greater awareness of, and responsiveness to, their harmful effects (See Appendix 1: Student Code of Conduct).
3. Ensure that all such inappropriate behaviours and complaints be taken seriously, documented, dealt with expeditiously and effectively through consistently applied policy and procedures.
4. Provide avenues of recourse to students and staff when they are victims of harassment, prejudice, intimidation, bullying and/or violence.

Alberta Human Rights Act and Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Canadian Reformed School Society of Neerlandia affirms the rights of students and staff members to not be discriminated against as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and subject to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the nature and character of Covenant as a private, voluntary religious association.¹

Student Support Organizations

Covenant promotes students helping students in their walk with their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Our curriculum actively encourages students to be a hand and a foot to one another (1 Corinthians 12), and to spur each other on towards love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24). The formation of a support organization is one more way this mutual encouragement and support can be achieved. To implement such a club a few simple procedures have been put in place:

1. Covenant will support the creation of student support organizations that are consistent with Covenant's foundational statements, purpose, and aims. School organizations must promote a safe and caring environment in accordance with God's Word.
2. If one or more students request support for a student organization, or seek to lead an activity intended to promote a safe, caring, respectful, inclusive, equitable and welcoming learning environment that fosters a sense of belonging, the administration may:
 - a. Permit the establishment of a student organization.
 - b. Allow the organization to use the school facilities.
 - c. Designate a staff member employed by the parent Board to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization or to assist in organizing the activity.
3. Students desiring to form a student organization, or lead an activity at Covenant, shall complete an application form (Appendix 2) and submit it to administration.
4. Administration is responsible for informing the Board and parents of the formation of student organizations. Notification concerning clubs, sports and activities will be consistent with the usual practices and the Biblical role and responsibilities of parents. Section 45(4)(d) of the *School Act* requires this Policy to indicate that the *Personal Information Protection Act* governs the disclosure of personal information by the Board.

¹ See e.g. *H.S. v. The Private Academy*, 2017 HRTO 791; *Caldwell et al. v. Stuart et al.*, [1984] 2 S.C.R. 603; *Loyola High School v. Quebec (Attorney General)*, 2015 SCC 12.

Appendix 1: Student Code of Conduct

Overarching Principles and Statement of Purpose Pertaining to the Creation of a Safe and Caring School Environment

Consistent with its foundational statements, purpose, and aims, the Canadian Reformed School Society of Neerlandia is committed to a safe, caring, respectful, inclusive, equitable and welcoming learning and teaching environment for all students and staff. As Christians we recognize and profess that all persons, irrespective of any differences to ourselves, are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and therefore possess inherent worth and dignity and should be treated as such. Furthermore our Lord Jesus Christ commands us love our neighbour as ourselves (Matthew 22:39), following His perfect example (John 15:12,13). Therefore the Canadian Reformed School Society of Neerlandia will not tolerate harassment, violence, name-calling, bullying, prejudice or intimidation of students or staff under any circumstances.

Expectations of Student Behaviour

- Students are to demonstrate respect for and obedience towards the Word of God. This respect means that opinions, decisions, and conduct are submitted to the authority of the Scriptures and the teachings of the confessions. This also includes a willingness to be corrected by the Word of God (2 Timothy 3: 16, 17). Students are to stand up for what is right before the Lord (Deut. 6:18). This includes speaking out against wrongdoing. It also includes encouraging peers to do what is right rather than what is evil.
- Students are to demonstrate respect for and obedience to teachers who are placed in authority over them (1 Peter 2: 13-17). This respect can be shown by addressing teachers by their proper titles, by speaking politely without back talk, by accepting and submitting to their instruction and discipline, and by not responding to admonition with inappropriate body language (Titus 3: 1, 2). Students are encouraged to raise their hands until they are recognized for speaking in class, and remain in the classroom until dismissed by the teacher.
- Students are to demonstrate love and respect for their fellow pupils – both within the school, after hours, and in all electronic communication. This can be shown in the way they treat other students - including their property, and their feelings. “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.” (Romans 15:7) Gossip and ridicule break down and destroy. Students have the responsibility to refrain from, report and not tolerate bullying or bullying behavior. When unacceptable behavior outside of school (after school hours or electronically) negatively affects a member of the school or spills into the school environment there may be consequences for that behavior.
- Students are to demonstrate respect for school property and their own property by taking care of the things entrusted to them (Matthew 25: 14-30) and leaving alone what does not belong to them.
- Students are to work diligently to complete required courses to the best of their ability (Colossians 3:23, 24). They must enter classrooms at a correct time in a proper manner and must be properly prepared.
- Students are to show humility by admitting and apologizing for wrong doing and accepting the consequences that follow (James 5:16; Proverbs 19:20).

This list of expected behaviours is by no means exhaustive. In summary, students are to demonstrate loving, respectful, acceptable and courteous behaviour at all times, making use of proper manners, willingly submitting to the Word of God, the authority of the teachers and administration, and the rules and regulations as outlined in this document.

Unacceptable Behaviours

The following is not an all-encompassing list of prohibited behaviours, but rather gives guidance and direction to staff and students. Ultimately, any behaviour that interferes with the learning of others and/or creates unsafe conditions is not permitted. Examples of such behaviours include:

- Physical violence
- Acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation
- Being in possession of dangerous materials (e.g. knives, fireworks, etc.)
- Retaliatory behaviour towards those who report or try to prevent bullying
- Illegal activities (possession of drugs, restricted substances, theft, damage to property)

Bullying

Definition:

Bullying is a deliberate, conscious and willful hostile act intended to harm others. It usually involves the overpowering and controlling of another person(s) to intimidate, dominate or exclude them. It can be direct, indirect, and it comes in various forms. Bullying can be physical, verbal, social or spiritual in nature. It can be a single incident, but often it is persistent.

Consequences:

Bullying will not be tolerated. Individual circumstances, age, maturity, and the severity of the offence will be taken into account when determining appropriate consequences. Depending on these factors a detention or suspension will be issued. Parents will be notified of the incident and work with the school to prevent such behaviour in the future. Parents of the victims will also be contacted. A record of the incident will be kept for one calendar school year.

If two previous suspension records exist for a given school year, and the student engages again in bullying he/she will be suspended and parents will be asked to meet with representatives of the Board. Depending on the outcome of the meeting, the student may be expelled.

Restoration and support

As a Christian school, we strive to achieve reconciliation and unity in the spirit of Matthew 18:15-19. Students and staff will be encouraged to seek reconciliation with one another and, if required, seek out the assistance of a third party within the school (i.e. a teacher or staff member). If reconciliation is not achieved, all parties will meet with the Principal to work towards restoration.

If the conflict involves the Principal, the parties will meet the Chair of the Board to work towards restoration.

Appendix 2: Application form – formation of Student Support Organizations



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Request Form for the Creation of Student Support Organizations

Rationale:

Please explain how the formation of your club will help Covenant achieve its Purpose and General Aims as outlined under on page four of your Parent/Student Handbook.

Please explain how the creation of your club will help promote a safe and respectful learning environment here at Covenant.

What would you like to call your Student Support Organization?

Thank you for taking the time to fill this form out and for your efforts and enhancing the learning environment here at Covenant.

Parent Signature

Student Signature

