

Oak Bay High School

SAFE AND CARING SCHOOL STRATEGIES AND PROCEDURES

Revised February, 2016

Developing a Safe School Culture

- New school is designed to be open, warm and welcoming. Every teaching space has large windows and lots of natural as well as full-spectrum artificial light.
- All staff and students are warmly welcomed (transition notes, transition day, needed supports created right away, placed in a TAG with a friend, encouraged to be supportive to each other, and to seek and accept help when needed).
- In support of this, we have developed a very strong philanthropic culture in the school (eg: C4C, Youth Against Cancer, Hero Holiday, Youth Philanthropic award 3 years in a row).
- A well-integrated international program that welcomes over 100 students of other cultures and languages to the school every year.
- A welcoming of diversity with groups and clubs such as Youth Combatting Intolerance (YCI), Youth for Change and Inclusion, Gay Straight Alliance (GSA), and Amnesty International.
- Our many athletic teams, clubs and Performing Arts groups build self-esteem and team/interpersonal skills and deal immediately and firmly with any bullying/hazing behaviour
- Leadership classes and Students Council ensure students are well-engaged in the life and directions of the school.
- Our Advisory/Focus Block program provides a safe and supportive environment for each student to connect with the same teacher-mentor for their 4 year program at our school to advise/guide them in their studies. It also provides students with in-the-school-day open access to their teachers and learning spaces to support and extend their education in a personalized, self-directed and accountable way.
- Gender-neutral washrooms were created for the new school and signage is being revised for clarity

Levels of Assistance and Support

- We have 2.25 full time academic and personal counselors on staff that are trained in anti-bullying strategies and life-risk assessment.
- One full time Youth and Family Counsellor (YFC) with similar training.

- 40 Student Peer Counsellors who are trained to identify both bullying and life-risk issues, and to refer directly to school counselors.
- “Oak Bay Outreach” is a web-based opportunity for students to connect with a peer counselor in a safe and supportive fashion, under the supervision of our counselors. The Ministry of Education has indicated that they would like it to be a model for other schools in the province.
- Administration immediately responds regarding bullying issues and involves students, parents, teachers and counselors in resolutions as appropriate.
- Admin/Counselling Team Process – always at least two counselors are involved in any life-risk situation, admin team informed and a Project Alive Worker or other community Mental Health support workers are contacted and engaged.
- Admin and Counsellors use a secure, web-based spreadsheet for documenting and tracking student issues and support.
- Our School Based Team of Admin, Counsellors and our SpEd Dept Head meet on a weekly basis to discuss and action-plan regarding at-risk students.
- We have an extensive SpEd program to support at-risk students with special needs.
- Educational Assistants (E.As.) work in many classes as another set of eyes and meet biweekly to discuss and refer students of particular concern.

Student Education

- Advisory program (same homeroom teacher/mentor for all 4 years).
- Assembly program (eg: Darren Laur has been to speak about cyberbullying three times).
- Grade 9’s receive personal health education including bullying/self-harm issues.
- All students must take Planning 10 class which includes healthy living and healthy relationships curriculum.

Staff Education

- Warning signs provided to staff along with a reminder to refer to Counsellors.
- Family of Schools workshops on youth mental health have been provided on several ProD days with another planned this spring.
- TLC notes are routinely sent to staff for at-risk students with meetings held as needed.
- Staff reviewed and refined this document at a ProD day and will do so again at a staff meeting.

New Initiatives

- In recent case of bullying, a professional restorative justice team was brought in to support and educate further
- All students are currently being surveyed re how to become more welcoming toward international and other new and short-term students
- All students are currently being surveyed re perceptions of safety and processes related to comfort and safety
- The issue will be raised with the Parent Advisory Association executive in February and the possibility of a cyber and other bullying parent meeting explored

Some Learning Strategies in use that Increase Student Connectedness

- Collaborative learning
- Project Based Learning

Community Resources

- Emergency Mental Health
- Project Alive
- Police Liaison
- P.A.C.
- Mary Manning Centre
- Eating Disorders Association
- The Restorative Justice Team of Victoria
- The new **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren** support line is now available. Toll Free 1-855-474-9777 or email grgline@parentsupportbc.ca
- The new [Speak-Out Youth Zone](#) website for teens was created by the **Adoptive Families Association of BC**. The site allows teens to connect with each other and share their experiences with issues such as adoption, foster care, attachment, youth advocacy and transracial adoption.