



Lakeland Christian Academy

Safe and Caring Policy

PART I

Consistent with its mission and vision, Lakeland Christian Academy is committed to a safe, caring, respectful, and welcoming learning and teaching environment for all students and staff. This environment shall be one that recognizes and respects student diversity, equity of learning opportunity for all students, respect for human rights, and that fosters a sense of belonging of all students within a respectful school community.

This policy recognizes that all students and staff have the right to learn and work in an environment free of discrimination, prejudice, and harassment.¹ Lakeland Christian Academy believes that God is Sovereign and the Bible, God's Word, is inerrant and true. So as God, the creator and sustainer of all things, is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34, Rom 2:11), Lakeland Christian Academy remains unprejudiced in its interaction with parents, staff, students, and the community. All human beings are created by God and bear His image (Gen. 1:26, Gen. 9:6). Therefore, all human life has intrinsic value, regardless of differences in abilities or attributes.

PART II

Lakeland Christian Academy supports the ongoing growth of inclusive communities by involving our parents, staff, students, and school community in a wide range of opportunities to learn about, support and be part of the diversity that reflects our society. In this way the school can focus on building true inclusion and support for its students.

This policy does not define one set of human needs as greater than another as God is not a respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11). This school policy supports and respects the individuality of all students and aims to create a positive and supportive environment focused on providing the best possible learning opportunity for each student. True human flourishing and "wellness," then, are only possible when living in accordance with God's commands. Love, care & respect for our fellow humans, with a desire for their wellbeing, therefore demands that we call everyone to obedience to God's will as expressed in His Word and His created order (I Pet 3:8, Phil 2:4, I Cor 10:33, Deut 13:4).

Lakeland Christian Academy believes that all students have the right to:

- be treated fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect
- have matters of confidentiality dealt with in a respectful and careful manner
- freedom of conscience
- be welcomed in a positive, and respectful manner by all school personnel
- have access to appropriate supports, services, and protections
- have access to bathroom/change rooms based on biological sex in accordance with our statement of faith

¹ The Lakeland Christian School Society Board affirms the rights of students and staff members to not be discriminated against as provided for in the Alberta Human Rights Act to the extent applicable and subject to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the nature and character of Lakeland Christian Academy as a private, voluntary religious association. 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.

- have avenues of recourse (without fear of reprisal) available to them when they are victims of harassment, intimidation, bullying, and/or violence

PART III

As stated in our Parent/Student Handbook and our Student Code of Conduct, Lakeland Christian Academy is committed to implementing measures that will:

- Define appropriate expectations, behaviours, language, and actions in order to prevent discrimination, prejudice, and harassment through greater awareness of, and responsiveness to, their harmful effects.
- Ensure that all discriminatory behaviours and complaints will be taken seriously, documented, and dealt with expeditiously and effectively through consistently applied policy and procedures.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate inclusive educational strategies, professional development opportunities, and administrative guidelines to ensure that all students are treated with respect and dignity in all aspects of the school community in a manner consistent with the school's mission and vision.

PART IV

Lakeland Christian Academy will promote a welcoming, caring and respectful, safe learning environment that respects diversity, and fosters a sense of belonging.

When a student request for assistance, support, and/or an accommodation is received, the school, through the principal, will respond in a caring, respectful and timely manner.

All student groups and activities approved by the school will support the mission, vision and core values of the school and will seek to strengthen every aspect stated in Lakeland Christian Academy's Statement of Faith. All student activities will be permeated in a manner consistent with the vision, mission, and programming of the school.

As the *School Act* provides that "parents have a right and a responsibility to make decisions respecting the education of their children" and likewise the *Alberta Bill of Rights* guarantees as a fundamental freedom "the right of parents to make informed decisions respecting the education of their children", any notification concerning student organizations and activities will be consistent with the usual practices and responsibilities of the school.

Section 45.1(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.²

PART V

When implementing this policy (Parts I to IV), the Lakeland Christian Academy will act reasonably in the best interests of the student in keeping with the guidelines outlined by the Supreme Court of Canada

² Sections 45.1 and 16.1 of the *School Act* are currently under Constitutional challenge before the Courts: Lakeland Christian Academy recognizes that the application of any provisions of the *School Act* are subject to the paramount provisions of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Alberta Bill of Rights*, protecting freedom of conscience, religion, expression, association and the right of parents to make informed decisions concerning the education of their children.

(*Loyola High School v Quebec (Attorney General)*, 2015 SCC 12) in order to respect human rights, including parental rights and religious freedom. Consistent with the Court's guidelines, the school, the principal, teachers and other staff are free to act and communicate the school's animating faith and/or values in a respectful manner:

- *The School's teachers and staff may describe and explain the school's faith and/or value community beliefs, doctrines and ethical beliefs from the faith/perspective, and need not be required to adopt a neutral position.*
- *The School's teachers and staff must describe and explain the ethical beliefs and doctrines of other faith/value communities and other members of Alberta's pluralistic society in a respectful manner.*
- *The School's teachers and staff must maintain a respectful tone of debate — both by conveying their own contributions in a respectful way, and by ensuring the classroom dialogue proceeds in accordance with respect, tolerance and understanding for those with different beliefs and practices. Communication with or about those with whom we disagree should be loving and respectful, never in anger or hatred. This does not preclude honest, forthright communication about noncompliance with God's law. (Lev. 19:17-18; Is. 5:20; Gal. 5:14)*
- *Where the context of the classroom discussion requires it, the School's teachers may identify the School community's animating beliefs and/or values beliefs, why the school community follow those beliefs and/or values, and the ways in which another specific ethical or doctrinal proposition does not accord with those beliefs, be it in the context of a particular different religion or an ethical position considered in the abstract.*
- *The School's teachers and staff need not teach ethics or religious doctrines that are contrary to the school community's faith/value commitments in a way that portrays them as equally credible or worthy of belief. Respect, tolerance, and understanding are all properly required, and the highlighting of differences must not give rise to denigration or derision. However, ensuring that all viewpoints are regarded as equally credible or worthy of belief would require a degree of disconnect from, and suppression of, the School's own religious and/or value perspective that is incompatible with the school community's freedom of religion.*
- *Student behaviour must line up with Lakeland Christian Academy's Student Code of Conduct.*

As appropriate, if a parent or student believes the faith and/or value commitment of the School and the parent's or student's faith and/or values are incompatible and continuing to enroll the student in the School is not in the best interest of the student, then the School shall assist the parent or student to enroll in another school for the subsequent school year.