



Burnaby Teachers' Association Respectful Environment Policy

Background

- The BTA is committed to creating an environment marked by respect, dignity, fairness and cooperation.
- All individuals within the organization are to be treated with respect and to treat others with respect.
- Behaviour and/or situations that run contrary to such treatment will not be tolerated.
- The BTA recognizes that conflicts and misunderstandings will occur. We expect these issues to be resolved in a manner that contributes to a healthy and productive environment.
- The BTA promises to respond quickly to complaints about inappropriate behaviour, and to resolve issues speedily, openly, honestly and with appropriate consideration for privacy and confidentiality.

The highest value this policy intends to express is the right to the respectful expression of dissent.

Purpose

This policy aims to foster and create a respectful environment by:

- a) promoting and maintaining a common understanding of the expectations and behaviours considered appropriate and inappropriate.
- b) encouraging those behaviours which promote respect and mutual understanding.
- c) providing the necessary support and resources to individuals in conflict.

The application of this policy will help create an environment where all are treated with respect and dignity.

BTA Policy: Respectful Environment

Who:

This policy applies to all individuals working and volunteering for the Association and includes: BTA Staff and Full-time Table Officers, Executive Council members, Committee members, Staff Representatives.

Where:

- The BTA Office
- Locations visited by the individuals above while traveling on BTA/BCTF related business, including conferences and meetings.
- Social gatherings.
- Electronic meeting places such as email, blogs, social networks.
- All and any context and/or environment in which Union communication occurs.

BTA POLICY: RESPECTFUL ENVIRONMENT

1. Appropriate Behaviour:

A respectful environment is one of mutual support and respect. Examples of some of the many characteristics of a respectful working environment include:

- Members are courteous and respectful of others.
- Individuals are acknowledged.
- Diversity is valued.
- All work is valued.
- Confidentiality is maintained.
- The health, safety and wellness of others is valued and protected.
- The ideas of others are heard in an open-minded manner.
- When others' ideas or work are reviewed, positive features are identified as well as areas needing improvement.
- Input is sought from individuals who will be affected by decisions.
- Decision-making procedures are transparent and fair.
- Disputes are resolved in a constructive manner.
- Sincere apologies are offered when conduct has caused offence.

2. Inappropriate Behaviour:

Inappropriate behaviour is that which is objectionable and/or unwelcome to an individual. Such behaviour serves no valid work-related purpose and can create a poisoned work environment.

There are three (3) categories of inappropriate behaviour addressed in this policy. They are:

a) Bullying and Personal Harassment

Bullying and personal harassment is defined as behaviours that would be understood by a reasonable person to be contrary to the development and maintenance of a respectful relationship. These behaviours include but are not limited to incidents that are:

- vexatious; conduct, comments, actions or gestures which are humiliating, offensive, hurtful or belittling.
- repeated; conduct, comments, actions, e-mails, or gestures when taken in isolation seem minor but when repeated can lead to a conclusion of harassment.
- a single incident of sufficient seriousness to have a significant impact on the recipient or the work environment.
- hostile or unwanted.
- affecting the individual's dignity, well-being, or physical integrity.
- resulting in a harmful or poisoned work environment.

Examples of bullying and personal harassment include, but are not limited to:

- written or verbal comments, actions, gestures or other behaviours or 'jokes' which are humiliating, offensive, hurtful or belittling.
- intimidation.
- abusing authority.
- criticizing an individual in a public forum without first discussing the issue with the individual in private.
- yelling or shouting (except where intended to alert another to danger).
- excluding an individual from relevant work activities or decision making.
- decision-making which is influenced by factors which have no work-related purpose.
- spreading false information about an individual or group.

b) Discriminatory Harassment

Discriminatory harassing behaviours include comments or actions which are unwelcome, that are based on a prohibited ground of discrimination as outlined by the BC Human Rights Code (age, ancestry, colour, family status, marital status, mental or physical disability, place of origin, political belief, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity, criminal conviction) and result in a negative or poisoned work environment.

c) Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes comments or conduct such as:

- unwelcome advances, requests, comments, physical contact (unnecessary touching, pinching or jostling) or gestures (suggestive or persistent staring) that are of a sexual nature.
- implied or expressed threats of reprisal for refusal to comply with a request of a sexual nature or implied or expressed promises of reward for agreeing to comply with a request of a sexual nature.
- unwelcome remarks, jokes, taunts, suggestions or speculations about a person's body, attire, sex life, etc.
- displays of pornographic or other sexual materials in the form of pictures, electronic mail, graffiti, cartoons or sayings.

3. Actions that are not included in this policy:

Nothing in this policy restricts the legitimate exercise of supervisory or managerial responsibilities, including giving advice, assigning work, performance appraisal, performance or behaviour correction and discipline for cause; or respectful discussion of different points of view; or the freedom of individuals to choose with whom they socialize in activities not related to the workplace.

4. Responsibilities:

Every individual has the right to be treated in a fair, reasonable and respectful manner. For this to be a normal part of our environment, we must find strategies which prevent our differences from escalating and resolve them quickly when they do occur.

As a member of the BTA, you are responsible for creating a respectful environment by:

- ensuring your behaviour is respectful and appropriate at all times.
- accepting responsibility for your own actions, reactions, and behaviours and your impact on others.
- making your concerns known promptly if something is troubling you.
- being a part of the solution.
- immediately informing the Table Officers and/or the police if there is an imminent threat or risk of violence that could compromise an individual's safety.

5. Leader Responsibilities:

Full-time Table Officers at the BTA have additional responsibilities to create and sustain a respectful workplace environment. They include:

- being a role model for respectful behaviour.
- ensuring awareness of and compliance with the Respectful Environment Policy
- taking appropriate action in a prompt, impartial and confidential manner when Respectful Environment Policy issues come to your attention.
- supporting all parties involved in resolving issues under the Respectful Environment Policy, making sure no person suffers reprisal as a result of making a complaint, or for providing information.
- ensuring that all committee chairs are trained in the Rules of Order, Boundaries, Code of Ethics, and Privacy Law.

6. Organization Responsibilities:

The organization is charged with the following responsibilities:

BTA Policy: Respectful Environment:

- To ensure that all individuals governed by this policy are aware of it and understand it.
- To provide ongoing training and/or support for creating and maintaining a respectful environment
- To maintain a Respectful Environment Committee (a sub-committee appointed by the Executive Council) (See below for composition of this committee.)

PROTOCOL FOR RESOLVING DISPUTES:

The highest value this policy intends to embody is the right to the respectful expression of dissent within the collective, collegial environment of democratic union structures.

All parties who participate in union activities need this common understanding about how to accomplish their individual goals within the collective organization.

The request to behave respectfully should not be confused with restrictions on the ability to express dissent. Democratic structures provide the process for addressing dissent and this policy addresses the manner in which it will be expressed.

Step 1:

Speak to the person whose actions or comments have made you feel uncomfortable and let them know how you are feeling. Keep a record of important incidents, facts, witnesses and the impact on you.

If this does not resolve the problem, proceed to Step Two.

Step 2:

Report the incident to a Table Officer in private. The Table Officer will take notes and listen carefully to your concerns. He/she will then speak with the individual in question to get their perspective on the issue.

Step 3:

The table officer will offer mediation to both parties. The options could include: Local mediation (Burnaby, Coquitlam or New West teachers), Internal Mediation Service (BCTF) or in rare instances, external mediation.

Step 4:

If mediation is refused or fails, the situation would then be discussed by the Respectful Environment Committee (a sub-committee appointed by the Executive Council). The committee shall be composed of a member of the Executive Council, a BTA member who is not on the Executive Council, and a teacher from outside the local.

The Respectful Environment Committee shall determine whether or not harassing behaviours have occurred as defined by the BTA Respectful Environment Policy.

Step 5:

Remedies and Resolutions will vary depending on the circumstances and the persons involved. All remedies and resolutions, however, will have as their goal the reinforcement of the working

environment as a harassment-free zone where all are treated with respect, dignity and fairness. Remedies and resolutions could include, without being limited to:

- a clear communication from the BTA of our expectations regarding respectful behaviour in the working environment
- individual or group training (e.g. Boundaries, Code of Ethics, Rules of Order, etc.)
- reminder of Employee counseling opportunities through Wilson Banwell and Associates
- further invitations to take part in a mediated process
- Executive Council request for resignation from a position/committee.

Step 6:

Appeal process. An appeal may be directed to the entire Executive Council for consideration. Nothing in this policy prevents individuals from seeking assistance by filing a Human Rights complaint, filing a police report, a Code of Ethics Complaint, or a harassment grievance as per the Collective Agreement.