

## **Respectful workplace policy**

### **Policy statement**

Bow Valley College is an organization that honours and values people, embraces diversity, actively practices inclusion, and educates one another with the intention of promoting human rights, uplifting dignity, and ensuring the health and safety of the college community.

Individuals in a Respectful Workplace will display behaviours that are:

- Open, inclusive, and respectful of diversity in all its forms,
- Empathetic and understanding,
- Safe and comfortable,
- Authentic and genuine, and,
- Honest and open among all staff and management, across and between all levels.

### **Purpose**

The Respectful Workplace Policy is the foundation upon which Bow Valley College builds and maintains a workplace culture that is safe, respectful, professional, inclusive and protective of the rights of both the individual and the institution, and provides clarity regarding the expectations of conduct in daily interactions, helps prevent workplace incidents, and addresses incidents when they do occur. The Respectful Workplace Policy is not intended to discourage employees from exercising their rights under other laws.

A respectful workplace is one that should be expected in all Bow Valley College events, regardless of location or modality (e.g., traditional classroom, distance, online learning, practicum, or work placement), as well as at special events and work-related social occasions.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all employees, independent contractors, volunteers, and any other individuals associated with Bow Valley College (e.g. vendors, suppliers and campus visitors). When a Respectful Workplace incident is reported by a Complainant, Bow Valley College will identify if the Respondent(s) status with the college alters or takes precedence over this procedure due to a contract, Collective Agreement or statute.

### **Compliance**

Members of the college community are expected to adhere to the policies, procedures, and standards established by the college. These policies are designed to foster a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment that supports learning, teaching, and professional integrity.

Non-compliance may create risk for the college and will be addressed accordingly through applicable college policies, procedures and contracts. This may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination for employees.

### **Principal objectives**

- 1.0 The value we can derive from a respectful workplace can be seen in:
  - 1.1 Increased staff satisfaction, morale, and productivity,
  - 1.2 Shared values of trust, empowerment, and openness,
  - 1.3 Improved communication,
  - 1.4 Greater willingness and capacity for creativity, innovation, and collaboration,
  - 1.5 Overall mental and physical health for employees with increased engagement, retention, loyalty, and decreased absenteeism, and,

- 1.6 The drive to do our best.
- 2.0 A respectful workplace is achieved by and through our people. As such, we all need to play an active role in contributing to a positive workplace culture. This can take a wide variety of forms, including but not limited to:
  - 2.1 Being committed to the practices of honesty, transparency, and compassion,
  - 2.2 Modelling respectful behaviour,
  - 2.3 Valuing the contributions that each individual brings to the organization,
  - 2.4 Holding ourselves accountable for performing our best,
  - 2.5 Encouraging others to perform to their highest potential,
  - 2.6 Offering positive feedback where due,
  - 2.7 Acknowledging and valuing diversity and diverse perspectives,
  - 2.8 Embracing differences,
  - 2.9 Being supportive and genuinely caring for others,
  - 2.10 Respectfully challenging the use of deprecating, defamatory, or harassing jokes, colloquial expressions, and/or remarks,
  - 2.11 Carefully listening for understanding,
  - 2.12 Engaging in direct, respectful, communication (in all its forms),
  - 2.13 Being aware of the language we use, including any unintended meanings,
  - 2.14 Practicing thoughtfulness towards others,
  - 2.15 Open to challenging our own world views,
  - 2.16 Celebrating accomplishments, and,
  - 2.17 Being willing to acknowledge and constructively respond to incidents of bullying, harassment, and/or behaviours that do not uphold the ideals of a respectful workplace.
- 3.0 Maintaining and nurturing a respectful workplace is a shared responsibility. Staff have the following general responsibilities and accountabilities:
  - 3.1 Being familiar with the expectations and responsibilities associated with this Respectful Workplace Policy,
  - 3.2 Acknowledging their role in contributing to a respectful workplace by being active, not passive,
  - 3.3 Where appropriate, being willing to have open and respectful conversations by sharing observations of any behaviours that may breach this policy and how they may have impacted any individuals,
  - 3.4 Being willing to balance constructive feedback with acknowledgement of positive behaviours, and
  - 3.5 Seeking support from the Human Resources Business Partners as needed.
- 4.0 Leaders and supervisors have heightened roles and responsibilities. Leaders must be willing to recognize and deal with issues and behaviours that impede a respectful workplace. This will include:
  - 4.1 Knowing the definitions for and recognizing incidents of bullying, harassment (including sexual harassment), discrimination, and inappropriate, disrespectful behaviours,
  - 4.2 Creating an environment where violations that threaten a respectful workplace are not tolerated,
  - 4.3 Dealing with incidents as soon as they become known, without waiting for a complaint,
  - 4.4 Encouraging and coaching employees to identify and deal with inappropriate behaviours firsthand,
  - 4.5 Ensuring their team(s) know that they are a resource and are willing to deal with any concerns,
  - 4.6 Creating a space in which staff feel safe and supported to disclose concerns, and

4.7 Being supportive.

5.0 Leaders are responsible for monitoring and managing performance and have the right and authority to have discussions regarding behavior and performance with their employees.

## **Definitions**

### **Bullying:**

Bullying is often recognized as negative, unwanted, persistent, and repetitive acts of verbal and/or non-verbal behaviours that impact an individual's dignity and psychological safety. Bullying is intended to cause fear or distress, and to cause undue harm to one's feelings, self-esteem, and/or reputation.

Bullying can take the forms of (but is not limited to):

- Verbal abuse and intimidation,
- Physical abuse and/or intimidation,
- Condescending or patronizing behaviour,
- Hostile non-verbal behaviours,
- Practical jokes that result in embarrassment,
- Spreading rumors and gossip that damages a person's reputation,
- Refusing to work with a person,
- Purposefully excluding a team member from a team-based initiative or setting,
- Withholding information from a person, such that it impedes their ability to be successful in that person's job, and,
- Abuse of authority to the degree that it undermines a person's performance and/or threatens that person's career.

### **Collective agreement:**

A commercial agreement negotiated "collectively" between management (on behalf of Bow Valley College) and specific labour unions or associations (on behalf of employees). The collective agreement regulates the terms and conditions of certain employees in their workplace, their duties and the duties of the employer.

### **Discrimination:**

Discrimination is defined as unjust, unequal or inequitable treatment or behaviour(s) based on race, religious beliefs, political beliefs, colour, physical disability, mental disability, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, source of income, family status, gender identity, and gender expression.

### **Domestic violence:**

Domestic violence is a pattern of behaviour used by one person to gain power and control over another with whom the person has, or has had, a personal relationship, including dating, marriage, adult interdependent partnerships, custody, blood relationships and adoption, as well as relationships stemming from these situations. This can range from subtle, intimidating behaviours to violent acts that result in physical harm or death. Domestic violence can include physical violence, sexual abuse,

financial control, emotional and psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, stalking and using electronic devices to harass and control.

**Employee:**

Individual who is engaged to perform a service at Bow Valley College, in accordance with existing terms and conditions of employment, employment contracts or collective agreements, and includes the President and Chief Executive Officer;

**Harassment:**

Harassment is discriminatory and includes unwanted behaviours, such as conduct and/or comments that are demeaning, intimidating, threatening, and/or abusive, that risk loss of dignity and create a negative impact for the subject. Harassment can occur as a series of incidents or a serious singular incident.

Harassment can take the forms of:

- Slurs or derogatory remarks,
- Threats,
- Inappropriate jokes, teasing, innuendos, name-calling,
- Actions that invade privacy,
- Insults or name-calling,
- Humiliation,
- Communication that is demeaning, insulting, mocking, and,
- Unreasonable demands.

**Independent contractor:**

Businesses, either sole proprietorships or multi-person companies, which provide goods and/or services to Bow Valley College through a business transaction, are independent contractors. Worker payments, transactions, taxes and benefits are the responsibility of the independent contractor.

**Respectful workplace:**

A respectful workplace is one in which everyone is able to perform with personal and professional dignity. This includes embracing diversity and actively practicing inclusion with the intention of ensuring everyone is valued for their role and their contribution to the organization, as well as ensuring the health and safety of all.

**Safety:**

The state of being reasonably certain that one will not be emotionally, physically, or mentally hurt by other persons or situations.

**Sexual harassment:**

Sexual harassment is harassment on the grounds of sex and gender discrimination. It may include, but is not limited to:

- Any unwelcome sexual advance or solicitation, particularly in instances where the advance is from someone in a position of power and who can withhold or deny a benefit, can offer a reward for agreeing to comply, or holds the capacity to engage in a reprisal if the advance is rejected,
- Unwelcome physical contact,
- Sexually oriented and/or obscene remarks or gestures,
- Staring or leering at a person's body,
- Inappropriate comments about an individual's body or physical characteristics,



- Being subject to working in an inappropriate sexualized environment (i.e., discussions about sexual activities, experiences, or sexual prowess, as well as the displaying of sexual cartoons, posters, calendars, or other objectifying images), and
- Creation of a negative psychological and emotional environment based on gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

**Volunteer:**

A person at Bow Valley College who voluntarily offers himself or herself for a service or undertaking willingly and without pay.

## Data sheet

### Accountable officer

Executive Team member responsible People & Culture

### Responsible officer

Director, People & Culture

### Approval

See “Development Framework” for approvers of policy, procedures, and guidelines.

### Contact area

This may be the responsible officer or generally the department of the responsible officer.

### Relevant dates

Approved	Board of Governors: BOG190124-07
Effective	January 24, 2019
Next review	January 2022
Modification history	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reviewed: April 18, 2017 Executive Management</li><li>• Approved: April 27, 2017 Board of Governors</li><li>• Rebranded 2021</li><li>• December 2023 Vice President, People, Equity, Diversity &amp; Inclusion</li></ul>

### Associated policies

- Employee Code of Conduct (Policy #200-1-13)
- Student Code of Conduct (Policy #500 1-1)
- Workplace Relationships (Policy #200-1-3)
- Ethical Business Practices (Policy #200-1-5)
- Protected Disclosure (Policy #200-1-6)
- Violence in the Workplace (Policy #200-2-5)
- Sexual Violence Policy (Policy #500-1-19)

### Directly related procedure

- Respectful Workplace (200-1-1)

### Related legislation

- Alberta Human Rights Legislation
- Canadian Human Rights Legislation
- Occupational Health and Safety Legislation
- Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Legislation