

Our Commitment

Peel Alternative School recognizes that students achieve their best when they feel safe, nurtured, welcomed, respected and included. We are committed to providing a healthy climate for learning and working to support student success. For learning to be successful, schools must be free of negative factors such as bullying, discrimination and other harmful behaviours including physical violence in any form.

In the Peel District School Board, we understand that equity and excellence go hand-in-hand. One of the core goals in our strategic plan, the *Report Card for Student Success*, is the following:

"Achieve equity for students and staff—we provide equity of access and opportunity for students and staff to learn, work and develop in an environment that is nurturing, engaging, respectful and inclusive."

One of the Peel Board's projects is the implementation of six core character attributes. The attributes are taught in school, but they are also the basis of the board's working relationships – they help to create a positive climate for learning and working.

We want our staff and students to be:

- **Caring** – showing compassion and kindness towards others
- **Cooperative** – working collaboratively with others for a common purpose
- **Honest** – being truthful, trustworthy and sincere in our speech and actions
- **Inclusive** – treating everyone fairly and equitably
- **Respectful** – treating others, ourselves and the environment with high regard and value
- **Responsible** – being accountable and reliable in our actions and commitments

We believe that parents, the school and community must all work together to help students learn to become responsible members of society, being sensitive to the diversity, cultures and special needs of individual students. We must clearly demonstrate respect for social justice and human rights and promote the values needed to develop responsible members of a democratic society.

The Code of Conduct for Peel Alternative School aligns with and supports Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, the Peel Board's Human Rights policy and the Equity and Inclusive Education policy.

Our Code of Conduct

The Peel Alternative School Code of Conduct applies to all members of the school community including students, parents, guardians, volunteers, visitors and school staff, whether they are on school property, on school buses, at school-authorized events or activities, or in any other situation that may impact the school climate.

All members of the school community have a responsibility to respect and honour the school Code of Conduct, to demonstrate age and developmentally appropriate social behaviour and to take responsibility for their own actions.

Our Responsibilities

All members of the school community are expected to:

- demonstrate honesty and integrity
- treat one another with dignity, respect and fairness, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnicity, creed, citizenship, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability, socioeconomic status, or any other attribute
- take appropriate action to help those in need, seeking assistance to resolve conflict constructively and respectfully
- show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others

Parent and guardian responsibilities include:

- taking an active role in their son/daughter's education by ensuring that he/she is prepared for learning, including punctual and regular attendance, promptly reporting authorized absences and late arrivals, and communicating regularly with the school
- reviewing the school Code of Conduct with their son/daughter and helping him/her follow school rules
- helping their child understand that it is not appropriate to tease or bully others
- monitoring their child's internet use and taking responsibility for his/her behaviour when accessing electronic resources from home

Student responsibilities include:

- demonstrating a commitment to learning through punctual and regular attendance, being prepared and ready to learn
- practising honesty and integrity including, but not limited to, not participating in or encouraging plagiarism, misrepresentation of original work, use of unauthorized aids, theft of evaluation instruments, or false representation of identity
- following school rules and taking responsibility for his/her own actions
- refraining from bringing anything to school, or using anything inappropriately, that may risk the safety of themselves or others
- showing proper care and regard for school and community property, as well as only visiting other schools for school-related and authorized activities

Staff responsibilities include:

- helping students achieve to the best of their ability, developing self-worth, and being responsible citizens
- maintaining order in the school and holding everyone to the highest standard of respectful and responsible behaviour
- communicating regularly and meaningfully with parents/guardians
- establishing a range of clear, fair and developmentally appropriate interventions, supports, direct skill instruction and consequences for unacceptable behaviour including but not limited to homophobia, gender-based violence, sexual harassment and inappropriate sexual behaviour
- responding to and reporting behaviours which may have a negative impact on school climate

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

We are teaching students to identify and deal with bullying behaviour and to stop this behaviour from happening.

Bullying is typically a form of repeated, persistent and aggressive behaviour directed at an individual or individuals that is intended to cause (or should be known to cause) fear, distress and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem or reputation. Bullying occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance.

When someone experiences or observes bullying behaviour, he/she is expected to report it to a teacher, teaching assistant or school administrator immediately. Bullying behaviour will be dealt with using a progressive discipline approach.

Progressive Discipline

Peel Alternative School encourages, supports and recognizes acceptable behaviour in our students through a variety of positive practices. Progressive discipline is an approach that makes use of a continuum of interventions, supports and consequences, building upon strategies that promote positive behaviours.

We encourage students to take responsibility for their behaviour and to accept the consequences of their actions. A progressive discipline approach is used to deal with inappropriate behaviour. This may include: verbal reminders, review of expectations, contact with parent(s)/guardian(s), written reflections, volunteer services to the school community, conflict mediation and resolution, peer mentoring, referral for support services and/or an opportunity for restoration and repair.

We recognize that each student is a unique individual and that every situation that requires disciplinary action has its own set of extenuating circumstances. All factors that may have affected the student's behaviour will be considered before progressive discipline is applied. Students who behave inappropriately will receive an age and developmentally appropriate consequence. For a student with special education or disability-related needs, all progressive discipline approaches will be consistent with his/her Individual Education Plan and his/her demonstrated abilities.

Suspension and expulsion

Peel Alternative School also supports the use of suspension and expulsion for serious incidents as outlined in the Peel District School Board's Safe Schools Policy.

Before considering whether to impose a suspension or make a recommendation for an expulsion, a principal considers mitigating and other factors.

The behaviours for which a principal will consider suspending a student include:

- swearing (written or verbal) at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority
- bullying, including cyber-bullying
- uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person
- committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property
- possessing alcohol or restricted drugs
- being under the influence of alcohol
- committing any act, considered by the principal to:
 - have a negative impact on the moral tone of the school
 - have a negative impact on the physical or mental well-being of one or more school community members
 - be contrary to the school or Peel Board Code of Conduct

Incidents for which a principal will consider recommending to the Board's Discipline Committee that a student be expelled include:

- physically assaulting another person causing bodily harm that requires medical treatment
- possessing a weapon or using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person
- trafficking in restricted drugs or weapons
- giving alcohol to a minor
- committing robbery
- committing sexual assault
- behaviour that:
 - is significantly detrimental to the school climate and/or to the physical or mental well-being of others
 - causes extensive damage to school property
 - causes his/her continued presence at the school to pose an unacceptable risk to other members of the school community
 - is a pattern of behaviour so inappropriate that the student's continued presence is detrimental to the effective learning or working environment of others
 - demonstrates a persistent resistance to changes in behaviour that would enable him/her to be successful
 - is a serious violation of the school or Peel Board Code of Conduct

Students who are suspended or expelled will be given an opportunity to continue their education through educational programs offered by the school board.

Drugs

The school recognizes the benefits of a smoke-free environment for all persons. By law, smoking is not permitted at Peel Alternative School, on any other board property, on school buses or while attending any school-related event or activity. School property includes cars that are on school grounds and all lands to the edge of the sidewalk or street. The ***no smoking*** rule will be enforced within these areas.

Providing tobacco products to anyone under 19 years of age is illegal.

Alcohol and restricted drugs may be addictive and represent a health hazard. Possessing, using, trafficking in, or providing others with restricted drugs and/or alcohol will not be condoned at Peel Alternative School, on Peel Board property or at any school-related event or activity at any time. Drug-related paraphernalia that can be used for substance abuse are not permitted on school property.

Weapons

Possessing or displaying weapons of any kind, real, toy or replica, and all other objects that could inflict or threaten bodily harm will not be accepted at Peel Alternative School, on any Peel Board property, or at any school-related event or activity at any time.

Dress Code

The standards for school dress at Peel Alternative School are based on common sense and are intended to support the comfort, safety and modesty of all students. There is a strong relationship between neat, clean and appropriate clothing and a positive learning environment.

Use of Technology

Students will demonstrate appropriate online conduct and manners and refrain from improper/unethical use of technology, including computer hacking and cyber-bullying. The internet must not be used for any purpose that is contrary to the intent of the Peel Alternative School Code of Conduct. This applies to school, work and home internet use.

Cell phones may not be used for any communication or for taking photographs at school unless permission is granted by a school official.

Posting school-related photographs or images on the internet (including social network sites) without permission of a school official violates the Peel Alternative School's Code of Conduct

Bus travel

Students are expected to follow the standards of behaviour outlined in the Code of Conduct while they are on the school bus.

Students are required to:

- be at their bus stop at least five minutes before their pick-up time
- go directly to their seats and stay seated
- follow the bus driver's instructions and behave appropriately at all times

Students may not:

- consume food and drinks on the bus
- fight, swear or cause excessive noise on the bus
- engage in activities that may endanger the safety of themselves or others