

**STAFF & STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**2022-2023**

*“Improving the life chances of every student.”*



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## Welcome

Welcome to the 2022-2023 school year. I am fired up for the all the student success that we will be celebrating this year! A huge welcome to all the new students, staff and families joining Learning Alternatives. I want to welcome everyone to a place where we will do things differently. Please know that there is nothing I will not do for you and for our school. Our goal is to create personalized innovative learning programs to help every student find success. I promise to make sure our school will always be a safe place where we lead learning with love. Last June we gathered to celebrate a record number of graduates. Our school graduation showcased what Learning Alternatives is all about. The ceremony included heartfelt valedictorian speeches, students showcasing musical talents, a student backflip and marriage proposal between two graduates. The whole ceremony is available to view on YouTube or just click this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBd3GZ2uHb8>

You will hear me use the words dignity, purpose and options a lot as I wholeheartedly believe this is what we need to provide all our students. Here's what those words mean to the Learning Alternatives family:

***Dignity*** – Students leave our programs knowing they have worked hard; knowing they have been challenged and found success. They know and believe that they have accomplished difficult goals.

***Purpose*** – Students leave our programs knowing who they are; they know what they have to offer in this world. They believe their contributions are important.

***Options*** – Students leave our program with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful beyond the walls of our school building.

*We work hard every day to improve the life chances of our youth and we never, ever give up on them.*

This handbook has been prepared for your convenience. Comments on the contents are encouraged and I look forward to the further development, refinement and revisions of this booklet.

Huychqa Siiye'yu (Thank you Friend)

Brett Hancock, Principal

**School Goals:**

*Innovative instruction and assessment for all students and parents.*

*Building belonging for our diverse learning community.*

*Leading land based learning, environmental stewardship and sustainability.*

*Truth and reconciliation*

**Mission Statement:**

*“Improving the life chances of every student.”*

**School Vision Statement:**

*We develop programs to support youth not only to attend school, but to be participants in their learning, school and community. Learning Alternatives is ever changing each year depending on the needs of the learners*

**Hashtag/Tagline:**

*#morethanschool/More than School*

**Learning Leader Question:**

*How can we provide learning that ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors?*

### **Learning Alternatives**

Our school is a dynamic blend of forward-thinking education and personalized programming. We pride ourselves on individualized academic plans that focus on the students' strengths and use innovated strategies to help progress in areas that need improvement. Our team is comprised of creative teachers, supportive education assistants, caring child youth and family support workers, and an upbeat administration. Our goal is to guide our students to discover personal success and help them become productive members of our community. We believe in authentic, meaningful experiences that connect our students to the natural world. We work tirelessly to inspire sustainable values and behaviours. The Circle of Courage is woven throughout all of our programs. This model of youth development is based on the principles of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity.

### **Senior Learning Alternatives**

Senior Learning Alternatives was a grade 10-12 program but has now changed to include grades 8-12 students. We inspire students to create a vision for their future while our teachers offer supports to help translate that vision into reality. At our core we believe in building trusting student-teacher relationships that are built on mutual respect. We value diversity and positive self-expression. A variety of academic and elective course options are offered as we incorporate flexibility within a structured timetable. Work experience and volunteer opportunities are highly encouraged as our team is dedicated to helping them reach their full potential. This program is located at John Barsby Secondary School.

### **Ravens Lelum – Young Parent Program**

Ravens Lelum offers a specialized program that believes in prioritizing overall student wellness alongside their course work. This program empowers young parents to achieve positive academic performance in conjunction with effective parenting abilities. Our course work focuses on financial stability, healthy relationships and raising children. Ravens students can expect one-on-one coaching, mentorship as well as group support. We offer a safe and welcoming environment for young parents to work towards graduation while their child is being taken care of off site. This program is located at John Barsby Secondary School.

### **ABOUT - Alternative Based Opportunities United by Teamwork**

ABOUT is a vibrant grade 8-12 program that incorporates unique learning opportunities and indigenous cultural education as the foundation to core academics. Students can expect flexible scheduling and individualized supports as they work towards completing requirements for graduation. This program is a welcoming place for learning, gathering and sharing of talents. This program is located at Woodlands Secondary School.

### **ITT – Intro to Trades**

ITT is an innovative program that enrolls up to 18 students from grades 10-12 each semester. It gives students the opportunity to work alongside one teacher and one education assistant for all their learning. In the morning students focus on academics and then spend their afternoons working in one of the two shops, outside in the yard or in the community. Each semester ITT students build new learning studios that are used as a classroom for younger students in the district. Recent learning studios can be seen at Chase River and Randerson Ridge Elementary School. This program is located at Woodlands Secondary School.

### **Take a Hike Program**

Take a Hike is a full-time grade 8-12 alternate high school program using the outdoors and adventure to engage vulnerable youth in learning and their community while providing mental health supports. A full-time clinical counsellor is embedded in the classroom. This helps students overcome barriers to social and academic success, leading to high school graduation. This program is located at Woodlands Secondary School.

### **FLOW – Family Learning Outreach and Wellness**

The FLOW program is designed to provide social-emotional and mental health support for academically driven students whose current mental health makes it difficult to attend the larger brick and mortar high schools in our district. Our school site provides a low stimulus environment (no bells or block rotations) that removes many of the anxiety drivers experienced by our students. This program is located at Island Connect (previously Mount Benson).

### **Nanaimo Correctional Centre**

*For more information on the Education Program at Nanaimo Correctional Centre, please contact Brett Hancock.*

**Bus Schedule**

**Route 6**

<b>SERVICE TO Woodlands &amp; John Barsby</b>	
Applecross & McRobb	8:36 AM
DOVER BAY bus loop	8:38 AM
Rutherford Road (1 block up hill opposite Bradbury Road)	8:43 AM
4451 Wellington Road	8:48 AM
Meredith & Boundary (Bus stop Across from Woodlands)	8:55 AM
Waddington & St George Cres – youth housing	8:57 AM
Howard & 2nd	9:04 AM
Milton Road before Old Victoria	9:05 AM
<b>John Barsby community bus loop (by daycare).</b>	9:08 AM

**Route 8**

LA students from Ladysmith transfer at NROY to RTE 8	8:25 AM
Go to Cedar Secondary via Cedar Road (Check for LA STUDENTS)	8:40 AM
Harmac Road and Raines Road (LA Student's)	8:42 AM
Go to John Barsby community bus loop via 10th Street (offload & pickup)	8:50 AM
NDSS (offload & pickup)	9:00 AM
Woodlands Secondary drop on Strathmore Street	9:10 AM

**RETURNS**

<b>ROUTE 6</b>	
John Barsby Monday to Friday	1:30
Woodlands Monday to Friday	1:50
<b>ROUTE 8</b>	
Woodlands Monday – Thursday	1:20
John Barsby Monday – Thursday	1:35
Woodlands Friday	12:20
John Barsby Friday	12:35

### **September 2022 Dates**

Tuesday, September 6, 2022	-First Day 12:00pm-2:00pm
Wednesday, September 7, 2022	-First FULL Day of classes 8:30am-3:00pm
Thursday, September 29, 2022	-Photo Day for All Programs at Woodlands -Family Night 4:30pm-6:30pm at Woodlands
Friday, September 30, 2022	-Truth and Reconciliation Day NO SCHOOL

### **Professional Development Days and Holidays (No Classes in Session)**

Monday, October 10, 2022	-Thanksgiving
Friday, October 21, 2022	-Professional Development Day
Monday, October 24, 2022	-Professional Development Day
Friday, November 11, 2022	-Remembrance Day
Monday, December 19, 2022	-First Day of Winter Break
Monday, January 2, 2023	-Last Day of Winter Break (schools reopen January 3)
Monday, February 6, 2023	-Professional Development Day
Tuesday, February 7, 2023	-Professional Development Day
Monday, February 20, 2023	-Family Day
Monday, March 13, 2023	-First day of Spring Break
Friday, March 24, 2023	-Last day of Spring Break (schools reopen March 27)
Friday, April 7, 2023	-Good Friday
Monday, April 10, 2023	-Easter Monday
Thursday, May 11, 2023	-Curriculum Implementation Day
Friday, May 12, 2023	-Professional Development Day
Monday, May 22, 2023	-Victoria Day
Friday, June 16, 2023	-Graduation Day at Woodlands (No Classes)
Tuesday, June 27, 2023	-Last Day of Classes

### **Family Nights and Community Events for 2022-2023**

We are planning on having monthly family nights, community events, and some student concerts throughout the year. We would like to include a voice from all students and families before we plan and officially schedule these events. Please reach out to Brett with any ideas or questions. More information to come in the school updates and newsletters.



## Learning Alternatives Code of Conduct

### **Statement of Purpose:**

Learning Alternatives strives to develop a safe, caring, inclusive and welcoming environment that promotes the rights and responsibilities of all who learn and work together.

The *Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools 2.10 Inclusion Policy* is based on the principles of respect, acceptance, safety and equity. It “affirms a learning environment that reflects diversity, inclusivity and equity is essential in supporting the highest level of individual growth and achievement.”

### **Reference to the BC Human Rights Code**

The *BC Human Rights Code* states that three of its purposes are to:

“(a) foster a society in British Columbia in which there are no impediments to full and free participation in economic, social, political and cultural life of British Columbia

(b) promote a climate of understanding and mutual respect where all are equal in dignity and rights.

(e) to provide a **means of redress** for those persons who are discriminated against contrary to this Code.”

It further states 8 1 (b) a person must not “discriminate against a person or class of persons regarding any accommodation, service or facility customarily available to the public because of the race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or age of that person or class of persons.”

The *Safe Caring and Orderly Schools: A Guide* states, schools should be places where students are free from harm, where clear expectations of acceptable behaviour are held and met, and where all members feel they belong.

NLPS Inclusion Policy states that all members of our school community “have the right to expect that policies, procedures, programs and communications are inclusive and respectful”  
Administrative Procedure that supports the school Code of Conduct include:

- AP 312 - Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying and Discrimination
- AP 344 - Code of Conduct
- AP 345 – Student Suspension
- AP 347 - Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
- AP 350 - Honouring Diversity and Challenging Racism

### **Code Expectations**

Learning Alternatives Code of Conduct expects that students will demonstrate socially responsible behaviours that reflect respect and safety at school and while attending a school function at any location.

Acceptable conduct refers to socially responsible behaviours that help to make the school a safe, caring and inclusive environment including:

- Contributing to the school community
- Solving problems in peaceful ways
- Valuing diversity
- Defending human rights
- Respectful interactions with students, staff and community members
- Speaking up and reporting incidents that demean others or threaten the personal or emotional safety of individuals or groups
- Respect the law as it applies to yourself and others

Unacceptable conduct refers to behaviour that interferes with the safe and orderly environment of the school, either person-to-person basis or through social media, including, but not limited to:

- Engaging in incidents of harassment, intimidation, bullying or discrimination
- Interfering with the learning or orderly environment of the school or function
- verbal threats of harm, swarming
- Illegal acts such as: theft or damage to property, possession or distribution of an illegal or restricted substance, possession, use of a weapon, or physical violence.

AP 344 - Code of Conduct states: “Students with identifiable special needs might be unable to comply with a code of conduct due to having a disability of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional or behavioural nature. Such students may require special consideration in the selection of appropriate forms of intervention to ensure that they are not subject to disciplinary or intervention measures as a direct or indirect consequence of having a special need.”

### **Rising Expectations**

Learning Alternatives staff use the *BC Performance Standards for Social Responsibility* to teach students in appropriate social behaviour. There is an outline of progression of expectations held for students as they become older, more mature and move through successive grades. The expectations are educative, preventative and allow for many opportunities to teach the same social skill in a variety of ways.

## **Consequences**

NLPS Inclusion Policy states:

“The Board expects that all students, staff, and members of our school communities will adhere to a code of conduct that is educative, preventative and restorative in practice and response.”

### **1. Restorative Practices**

- focus on creating conditions for students to learn self-discipline, fix mistakes and return to the group/class/school strengthened.
- address the needs of those who have been harmed
- encourage the students, as often as possible, to participate in the development of meaningful, interventions through discussion or mediation to replace, repair or make “good” what has been taken, damaged, destroyed and/or defaced.
- responses to the harm are meaningful in addressing the needs of all involved
- help students reclaim their self-esteem through self-evaluation, personal effort and restitution
- provide opportunities to model leadership
- emphasize the importance of positive relationships in building community and,
- speak to the obligation we all have to each other to move towards wholeness, restoration and belongingness.

Participating in a meaningful consequence may include:

- a ‘do over’ opportunity
- face to face meetings to address the harm done
- group or classroom circles to restore equity, balance and respect
- an act of service to make a positive contribution to the class, school or community
- school/community support to learn and practice problem solving or conflict resolution strategies
- reflective/think process that includes the opportunity to create a plan to restore the harm done

### **2. Student Suspension**

Discipline measures used with students should be viewed in the context of helping students achieve intellectual and social development. The purpose of suspension, or any other discipline strategy, should be to meet these provincial goals and to develop self-reliant adults. Suspension is one strategy in a more complex problem-solving process designed to support the student in changing inappropriate behaviour. Used judiciously, suspension can have positive effects, including:

- ensuring safety for everyone in the school community
- assigning clear consequences for a range of serious breaches of code of conduct
- providing the time for planning support for behaviour change
- promoting collaboration among family, school, and other community services to solve problems

To be equitable, consequences may vary from student to student where the misconduct appears to be similar. Intervention must be appropriate to the student's age, maturity, needs, exceptionalities, extenuating circumstances and the nature of previous intervention taking in consideration of the needs of the school.

Refer to **AP 344 Student Suspension**

### **Notification**

School administration may advise other parties or agencies of serious breaches of the code of conduct depending on the severity and/or frequency of misconducts and the impact on others and/or the school community. Illegal acts will be reported to the RCMP and/or District Administration to develop a safety plan that will include the components of education, prevention and restorative action.

### **Retaliation**

No student, school employee, parent or volunteer may engage in reprisal or retaliation against a victim, witness, or other person who brings forward information about an act of harassment, intimidation, bullying, prejudice or discrimination. Reprisal or retaliation is prohibited and will result, where appropriate, in discipline and/or in the filing of a complaint with other appropriate authorities.

### **Appeal Process**

The Board of Education recognizes and respects the fact that students and /or parents or guardians may sometimes disagree with decisions made by employees. The School Act of British Columbia gives parents or guardians and students (with parental consent) the right to express concerns or appeal certain decisions. This right of appeal applies to decisions that significantly affect the health, education or welfare of students. Information regarding the Board's appeal procedure and a copy of the formal appeal bylaw can be accessed at [sd68.bc.ca](http://sd68.bc.ca) / Board Policies / 1000 Board Governance / 4.0 Bylaws. Prior to an appeal it is expected that school administration, students and parents or guardians will work to try to resolve concerns at the school level.