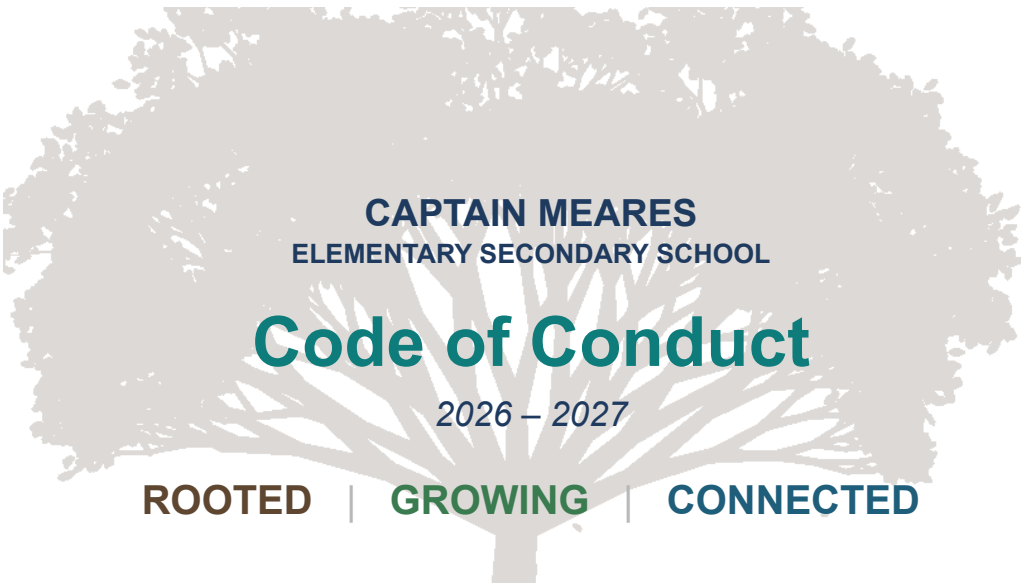




**CAPTAIN MEARES  
ELEMENTARY SECONDARY SCHOOL**

# Code of Conduct

2026 – 2027

**ROOTED | GROWING | CONNECTED**

*On the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the  
Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation.*

*Tahsis, BC — School District 84, Vancouver Island West.*

*This Code was developed in 2025–2026 in consultation with students, families, staff, and rights-holder representatives.  
It is reviewed annually.*



# Why This Code Exists

Captain Meares Elementary Secondary School is a small K–12 school in Tahsis, BC. We serve students from Tahsis and surrounding communities on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation. Our students bring with them many cultures, languages, family stories, and ways of being in the world. Our job — every adult in this building, and every student in it — is to make this a place where every one of them is safe, learns well, and grows.

This Code of Conduct exists to make that work clear. It sets out what we can expect from each other at CMESS, what we cannot do here, and how we respond when things go wrong. It is grounded in the BC Human Rights Code, the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care's Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA), and the ERASE (Expect Respect And a Safe Education) strategy.

It applies at school, at school-related activities, on school buses, on field trips, and in any other circumstance — including online — where what we do affects our school community.

## How this Code is organized

We have organized this Code around three ideas. They are not rules. They are how we think about who we are and how we live and learn together at CMESS.

**ROOTED** in who we are — in our families, our cultures, our identities, and in this place.

**GROWING** through what we learn, the mistakes we make, and the people we are becoming.

**CONNECTED** to each other, to the land, and to the wider community we belong to.

Each section of this Code uses the same structure. For each idea, we name what every student has the right to expect, what every student has the responsibility to bring, and why it matters. Adults at this school — teachers, support staff, the principal, visitors — hold themselves to the same expectations.



# ROOTED

*In who we are. In our families, cultures, and identities. In this place.*

This section is about safety, identity, and belonging. Every student who walks through our doors carries who they are with them. The Code starts here because nothing else works if students do not feel safe to be themselves at CMESS.

## I am safe here

### **I have the right...**

to feel physically and emotionally safe at CMESS — in classrooms, hallways, the playground, on the bus, on field trips, and online.

### **I have the responsibility...**

to act in a way that keeps myself, other students, and adults safe — with my hands, my words, my choices, and what I share online.

**Why?** *Safety is the foundation. We cannot learn or grow when we are afraid. This applies to physical safety and to the emotional safety of being treated with care.*

### **I have the right...**

to a school free from violence, threats (including threats made as jokes), weapons, and intimidation.

### **I have the responsibility...**

to never bring weapons or weapon replicas to school, and to never threaten another person — even as a joke. If I see or hear something that worries me, I tell a trusted adult right away.

**Why?** *Threats that turn out to be jokes still need a response. We have learned across BC that schools where adults take every concern seriously are schools where students stay safe.*

## I belong here

### **I have the right...**

to be myself at CMESS — including my culture, language, family, beliefs, ability, gender, sexuality, and the things that make me, me.

### **I have the responsibility...**

to make space for other students to be themselves — even when they are different from me, even when I do not understand them yet.



**Why?** *Belonging is not earned by being similar to other students. It is the starting point. This is what the BC Human Rights Code requires of every school in this province.*

**I have the right...**

to a school where I am protected from discrimination on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, religion, family status, marital status, physical or mental ability, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or age.

**I have the responsibility...**

to not use language or behaviour that targets another person on those grounds — and to speak up when I see another student being targeted.

**Why?** *These are the grounds named in the BC Human Rights Code. They are not opinions. They are the legal floor for every BC school. CMESs chooses to also name anti-Indigenous racism specifically, given the territories we are on and the communities we serve.*

## This is our shared place

**I have the right...**

to learn in a school that honours the territory of the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation on which we sit, and the culture, language, and knowledge systems of the Nation whose lands we share.

**I have the responsibility...**

to learn about the Nation whose territory we are on, to engage with respect when Indigenous knowledge, language, and practices are shared at our school, and to recognize that this Code itself is shaped in partnership with the rights-holder.

**Why?** *Reconciliation is not a single event. It is how we work, every day. The First Peoples Principles of Learning remind us that learning supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors. That principle holds this whole Code together.*



# GROWING

*Through what we learn. The mistakes we make. The people we are becoming.*

This section is about learning, effort, and repair. A school is a place where young people are still becoming who they will be. Mistakes are part of that. So is the work of making things right when we cause harm.

## I am here to learn

### I have the right...

to a learning environment that supports me — where I can be challenged, ask questions, get help when I need it, and try things that are hard.

### I have the responsibility...

to show up ready to learn — bringing what I need, putting away things that distract me from learning, and engaging with the work in front of me.

**Why?** *Coming ready to learn looks different for every student and on every day. Adults at CMESS will work with each student to understand what "ready" looks like for them. Students are expected to do their part.*

### I have the right...

to receive support — from teachers, education assistants, the Learning Resource Teacher, counsellors, and the Indigenous Support Worker when one is available.

### I have the responsibility...

to listen to and engage with the adults who are here to help me learn — including when I disagree with them in the moment.

**Why?** *Following an adult's instruction in the moment is not the same as agreeing with everything they say. Students are welcome to ask questions, to disagree, and to raise concerns afterwards. The order matters: do what is asked, then ask questions.*

## Mistakes are part of learning

### I have the right...

to make mistakes, to be honest about them, and to be supported as I learn what to do differently next time.

### I have the responsibility...

to take responsibility when I cause harm — to acknowledge it, to listen to the person I have affected, and to work to repair what I can.



**Why?** Restorative practice does not mean there are no consequences. It means the first question we ask is what happened, who was harmed, and what is needed to make things right. Consequences follow naturally from that conversation.

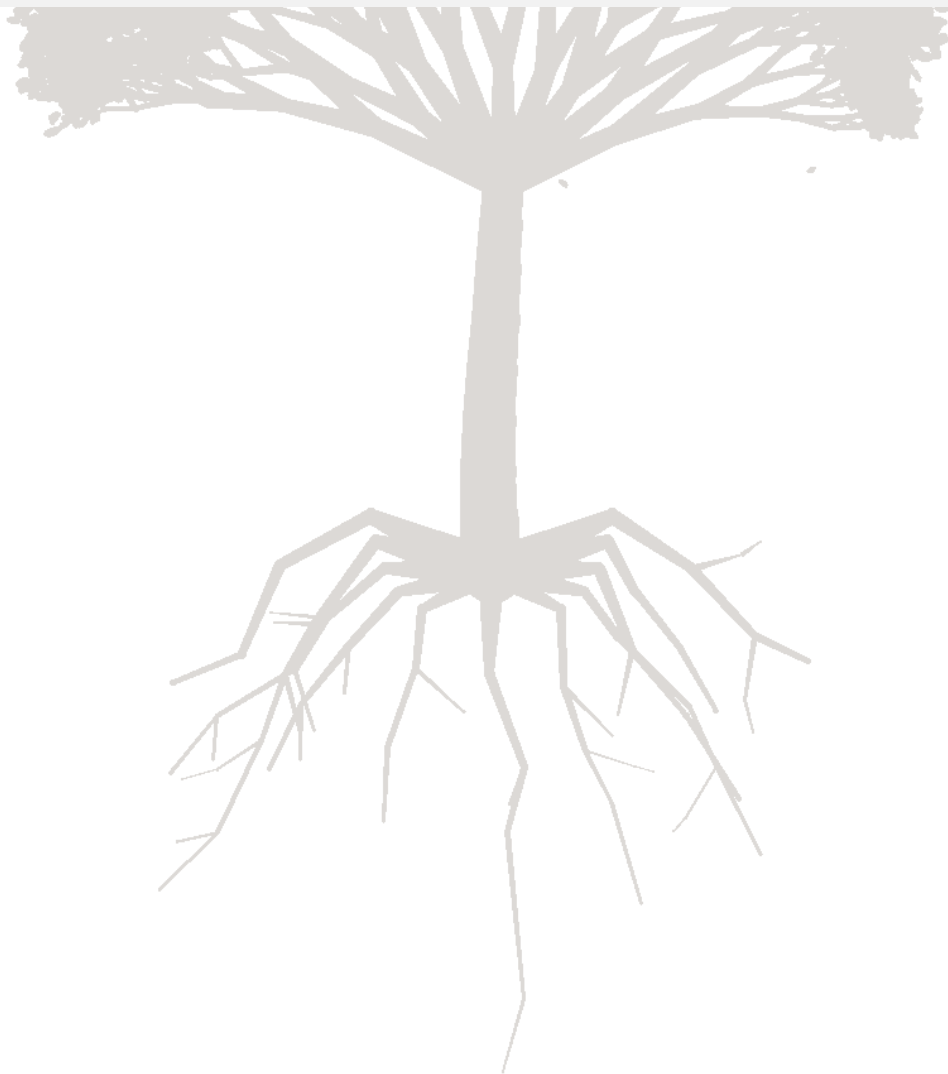
**I have the right...**

to be treated as someone who is still becoming — not defined by my worst moment, but supported to grow from it.

**I have the responsibility...**

to give other students the same grace. To not define another student by their worst moment.

**Why?** This is one of the things that makes a small school work. Students who have caused harm need a path back to the community. Students who have been harmed need real accountability. The Code holds both.



# CONNECTED

*To each other. To the land. To the wider community we belong to.*

This section is about how we treat each other — in person and online, when adults are watching and when they are not, on school grounds and in the chats and group messages that extend the school into our homes. It is the longest section of the Code because it is where most of the daily work of a school lives.

## We treat each other with care

### I have the right...

to be treated with kindness and respect — by other students, by adults, in person, and online.

### I have the responsibility...

to treat other students and adults with kindness and respect — in person, in writing, and online.

**Why?** Kindness is not about being the same as the other person, agreeing with them, or pretending difficulties do not exist. It is about how we treat each other while we work things out.

### I have the right...

to be free from bullying — including teasing, exclusion done on purpose, spreading rumours, name-calling, mocking, online harassment, and any behaviour that targets me repeatedly or targets me because of who I am.

### I have the responsibility...

to not bully other students — and to not stand by silently while another student is being bullied. To speak up, get help from an adult, or use a confidential reporting option like ERASE.

**Why?** Bullying is more than "someone being mean once." It is a pattern of behaviour, or behaviour targeted at who someone is. The BC Safe and Caring School Communities Policy treats this seriously. So do we.

### I have the right...

to not have my image, words, or voice recorded or shared without my permission — especially in private spaces like washrooms or change rooms.

### I have the responsibility...

to not record, photograph, or share another person's image, voice, or words without their permission. To never record in private spaces.

**Why?** Recording without permission is a form of harm even when it is not intended that way. Sharing a recording multiplies the harm. The Code applies to what happens with our phones and what happens after.



## We are responsible for our words

### I have the right...

to not be targeted by language that hurts me because of who I am — my race, ancestry, religion, family, ability, gender, sexuality, language, or appearance.

### I have the responsibility...

to not use language that hurts others for who they are — including slurs, mocking accents or cultural practices, jokes that punch down, or comments about a person's family or identity. This applies in person and online, in group chats and in posts, whether the person is present or not.

**Why?** Language carries weight. A family that survives consultation with this Code asked us to be specific: we are responsible for what we say to each other AND what we say about each other when the person is not there.

## We look out for each other

### I have the right...

to belong — in classes, on teams, in clubs, at lunch, in friendship groups. To not be deliberately left out.

### I have the responsibility...

to include other students — especially students who are new, who are alone, or who are not in the popular group on any given day. To invite someone in.

**Why?** Deliberate exclusion is one of the most painful experiences a young person can have. We name it in this Code because students who did the survey told us it happens here, and they want it to stop.



## Telling Is Not Snitching

**When you tell a trusted adult that someone might get hurt, that is not snitching. That is keeping each other safe.**

Snitching is telling on someone to get them in trouble. Reporting is telling to get help — for someone in danger, for someone being hurt, for yourself when something doesn't feel right.

Students who participated in the survey for this Code told us they sometimes stay silent because they don't want to be seen as snitches. We want to be honest about that — and we want this Code to name what too many young people are afraid to say.

Adults at CMESs will respect your trust. We will not name you to the person you are concerned about unless we have to for your safety. We will follow up. We will tell you what we are doing where we can.

### Three ways to raise a concern

You don't have to do this alone. You don't have to be sure. If something doesn't feel right, here are your options.

1. Tell a trusted adult at the school. This might be your teacher, an EA, the Principal, an Indigenous Support Worker, an Elder visiting the school, or any adult you trust. You can ask to talk in private.
2. Use the school office phone (250-934-6305) at any time during the school day to call home if you are worried — about yourself, a friend, or a situation. You can do this without giving up your phone-policy break.
3. Use ERASE — Expect Respect And a Safe Education. ERASE is a confidential online reporting tool. You don't have to give your name. Reports go to a District Safe School Coordinator who follows up with the school. Find it at [erase.gov.bc.ca](http://erase.gov.bc.ca).

**If you are in immediate danger, call 911.** Don't wait for an ERASE report or an adult to come find you. 911 is faster and free.

### Protection from retaliation

CMESs will take all reasonable steps to prevent retaliation against any student or adult who raises a concern under this Code. Trying to get back at someone for telling — directly or by spreading word about it — is itself a violation of the Code and will be treated as such.



# What Will Not Happen At Our School

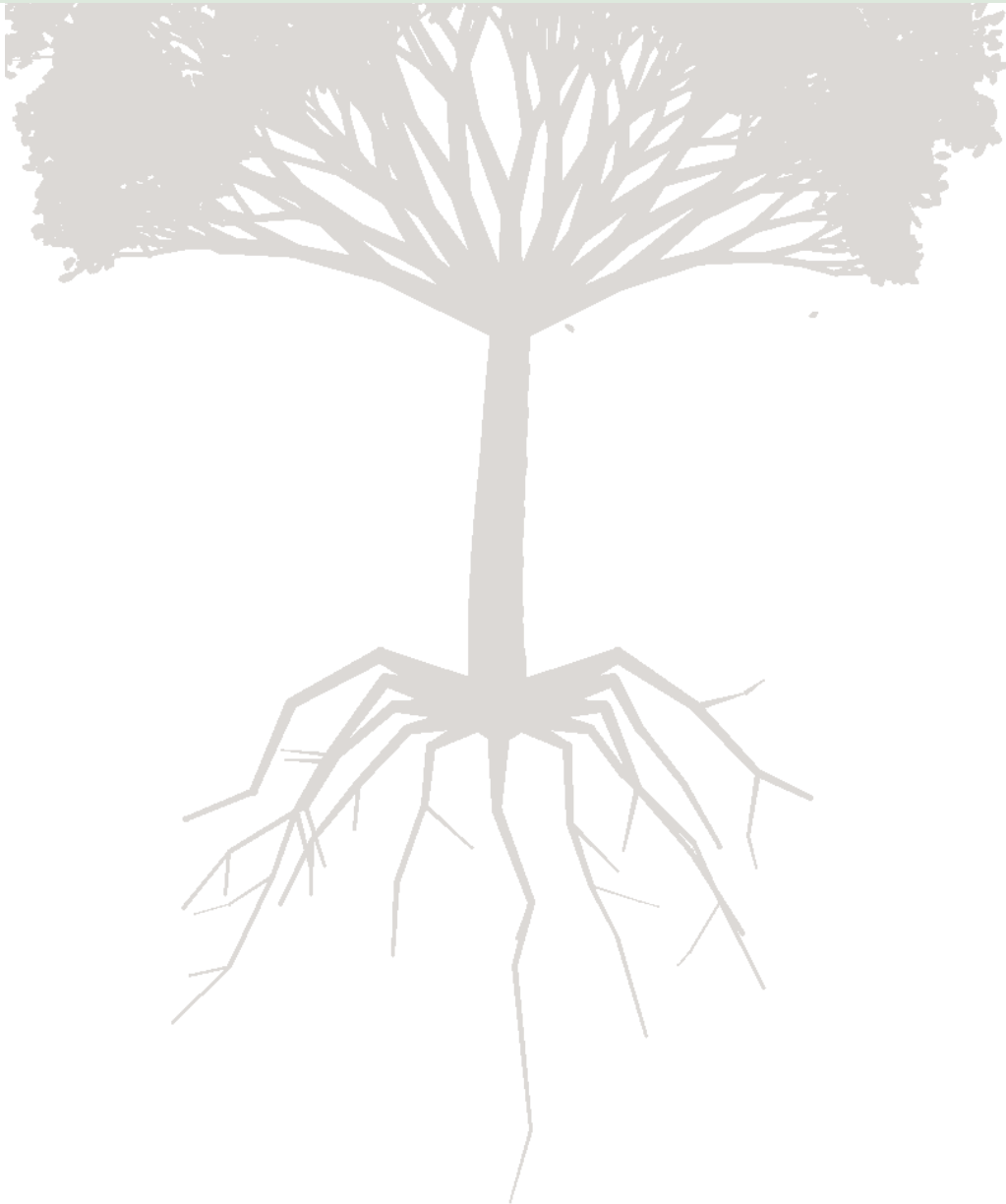
Most of this Code is about how we want to live together at CMESS. This section is the other part: the things that are not acceptable here. Some of these are unacceptable because they are unsafe. Some are unacceptable because they violate the rights of other students or staff. Some are illegal under the laws of British Columbia and Canada. All of them carry consequences.

## Behaviour that will not be tolerated at CMESS

- Bullying — repeated unkind behaviour targeted at another person, in person or online, including teasing, exclusion done on purpose, spreading rumours, name-calling, mocking, and online harassment.
- Discrimination — language or behaviour that targets another person based on their race, ancestry, Indigeneity, place of origin, religion, family or marital status, physical or mental ability, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, or any other ground protected by the BC Human Rights Code. This includes anti-Indigenous racism and mocking of Indigenous languages, cultures, or practices.
- Violence — physical fighting, hitting, kicking, deliberately injuring another person, or threatening to do so. Threats made "as jokes" are treated as threats.
- Weapons — bringing weapons, weapon replicas, knives, or items intended to be used as weapons to school or any school activity.
- Substance use — possessing, using, selling, or sharing alcohol, cannabis, nicotine products (including vapes), or other drugs at school or any school activity.
- Recording or sharing without consent — taking photos, videos, or audio recordings of another person without their permission, and especially in private spaces like washrooms or change rooms. Sharing recordings to embarrass or harm another person.
- Online harm — using social media, group chats, or other digital tools to bully, threaten, harass, exclude, share private images, or target other students. The Code applies to what happens online when it affects the school community, including outside school hours.
- Persistent refusal to engage — repeatedly refusing to follow reasonable directions from staff, leaving class without permission, or refusing to engage with the supports the school is offering.
- Vandalism, theft, and damage — to school property, to the property of another student or staff member, or to the property of the surrounding community.
- Smoking — anywhere on school grounds, in line with the BC Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act.



**A note on Indigenous and culturally specific behaviours.** When Nuuchah-nulth or other Indigenous cultural practices are shared at CMES — by Elders, by NEW workers, by visiting knowledge keepers, by Nation representatives — students are expected to engage with respect. Mocking, refusing to participate in a disruptive way, or speaking disrespectfully about cultural practices is treated as a Code violation under the discrimination provisions above. Quiet, respectful non-participation for reasons of personal faith or family practice is supported and will be accommodated by staff.



# How We Respond

When a student's behaviour falls outside this Code, CMESS responds. Our first move is almost always restorative — a conversation about what happened, who was affected, and what is needed to make things right. Restorative does not mean soft. It means starting with understanding rather than starting with punishment.

Below is the range of responses available to staff and administration. They are not numbered in order. The starting point depends on the severity of the behaviour, whether it is a first occurrence or part of a pattern, the age and developmental stage of the student, any Individual Education Plan or support plan in place, and the impact on others.

## Range of responses

1. A conversation in the moment. A teacher or staff member talks with the student, redirects the behaviour, and the day continues.
2. A follow-up meeting. A more careful conversation between the student and a staff member — sometimes with the Principal — about what happened, what was at play for the student, and what comes next.
3. Family contact. The school calls home, sends an email, or asks for a meeting. Families are partners in this work. For serious incidents, the school will contact families promptly.
4. Repair work. A restorative conversation between the student who caused harm and the person who was harmed — when both are ready. An apology that means something. Restitution where appropriate. A plan for what to do differently.
5. Support plan or referral. A meeting of the School-Based Team, a referral to counselling, a referral to the Indigenous Support Worker or a community resource, a connection with the Learning Resource Teacher. For students with IEPs, the IEP team is involved.
6. In-school support time. The student spends time with the Principal or another staff member rather than in the classroom — to reset, to do reflective work, to repair. Not a punishment-by-isolation, but a deliberate change of setting for a defined time.
7. Suspension. For serious behaviour, repeated violations after support has been offered, or behaviour that endangers others. Suspensions can be in-school or out-of-school. They are accompanied by a re-entry plan and continued schoolwork.
8. District-level review. For very serious or repeated incidents, the matter is referred to the District. The Superintendent may become involved.
9. Police involvement. Where required by law — for example, threats of violence, possession of weapons, suspected criminal acts — the RCMP are contacted. The school does not have discretion in these cases.



**Important:** Responses are not applied the same way to every student in every situation. They are matched to the student, the behaviour, and the context. Students with IEPs or support plans receive responses consistent with those plans. Decisions about discipline are private and are not shared with other students or families.

### What we will not do

- We will not use suspension as the first response to a behaviour we have not tried to understand.
- We will not respond to one student's behaviour by tightening expectations on every student.
- We will not pretend serious behaviour is minor. When a student has caused real harm — to themselves, to another student, to staff — we name it and respond accordingly.
- We will not let one student's repeated behaviour become the price other students pay for being at this school.



# Phones and Personal Devices

BC's Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct (January 2024) set provincial expectations restricting personal device use during instructional time. CMESS implements this with a policy that has been confirmed through community consultation with families, staff, and students.

## The CMESS phone rule

**Phones and personal digital devices are away during instructional time.** Devices may be used during morning break and lunch, in designated areas.

- Personal digital devices include cell phones, tablets, smart watches, gaming devices, earbuds, and headphones.
- "Away" means out of sight in a bag, locker, or designated location — not on the desk face-down, not in a pocket on vibrate.
- Exceptions: devices used for instruction with staff permission, and devices required for accessibility, medical, or health reasons as outlined in a student's IEP or with prior arrangement with the Principal.

## If you need to reach your family during the day

Students can ask to use the school office phone (250-934-6305) at any time to call home or to receive a call from a family member. You do not need to wait for break. For anything urgent — feeling unwell, family situation, needing to talk to a parent — go to the office and ask. Office phones do not count against the device rule.

## If the rule is broken

Staff response is calibrated to what happened. A reminder for a first instance. The device held in the office until end of day for a repeated instance. A phone call to family if it becomes a pattern. The aim is to help students develop the habit, not to escalate to punishment unnecessarily.

## Why this rule

Research on adolescent attention, mental health, and social development supports significant device restrictions during the school day. Family and staff feedback during this Code consultation showed strong agreement (10 of 10 respondents) that devices should be away during instructional time. Students themselves — across grade groups — supported the current rule as the fairest of available options. This rule is also consistent with what students told us would actually help: reminders before punishment, lead by example, take phones at the door if needed.



# How This Code Lives

A Code of Conduct only matters if the people it applies to know it, talk about it, and revisit it. Here is how that happens at CMESS.

## Annual review

This Code is reviewed every year. The review includes input from students (through classroom processes appropriate to each grade), families (through PAC and direct outreach), staff, and a rights-holder representative from the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation. The Indigenous Education Council is consulted. Updates that follow consultation are brought back to the community before they are finalized.

## Partnership with rights-holders

CMESS sits on Mowachaht/Muchalaht territory. This Code is shaped, and re-shaped, in partnership with the Nation that holds this territory. A Nation representative is invited to comment on the Code and to suggest enrichment — including in their own language where they choose. The school commits to ongoing relationship rather than one-time consultation.

## How the Code is shared each year

- Sent home to families at the start of each school year — paper and email.
- Discussed in classrooms at the start of each year, with age-appropriate conversation.
- Posted on the CMESS website.
- Referenced when situations arise — not as a threat, but as a shared reference point we all return to.
- Reviewed at PAC meetings and at the Indigenous Education Council.

## Raising a concern about the Code itself

If you are a student, family member, staff member, Elder, community member, or rights-holder representative and you think something in this Code needs to change, you are invited to raise it. Contact the Principal directly, raise it at PAC, or raise it through Indigenous Education Council channels. This Code belongs to the community. It changes because the community asks it to.



# Appendix: Reference Information

## BC Human Rights Code — protected grounds

CMESS is committed to a learning environment free from discrimination on the basis of:

- Race, colour, ancestry, place of origin
- Religion
- Family status, marital status
- Physical or mental disability
- Sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression
- Age
- Political belief
- Lawful source of income

## ERASE — Expect Respect And a Safe Education

- Web: [erase.gov.bc.ca](http://erase.gov.bc.ca) or [erasereportit.gov.bc.ca](http://erasereportit.gov.bc.ca)
- Anonymous reporting — you do not need to give your name.
- Covers bullying, online safety concerns, mental health concerns, threats, and other safety issues.
- Reports are reviewed by a District Safe School Coordinator who follows up with the school.

## Key contacts

- CMESS school office: 250-934-6305
- SD84 District office: 250-283-2241
- Emergency: 911
- Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868 (call or text CONNECT to 686868)
- KUU-US Crisis Line (Indigenous-specific support): 1-800-588-8717

## Related SD84 Administrative Procedures

- AP 140 — Social Media Use
- AP 250 — Off-Site Activities
- AP 318 — Communicable Diseases
- AP 350 — Student Code of Conduct (district level)
- AP 351 — Suspension and Discipline
- Full set: [sd84.bc.ca/about-sd84/administrative-procedures/](http://sd84.bc.ca/about-sd84/administrative-procedures/)



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