



## POLICY

Policy Name	<b>GENDER BASED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE</b> <i>Revised</i>		
Policy Number	SD 4.0	Category	Students
Policy Authority	Manager, Student Conduct, and Director, Human Resources	Approval Date	December 3, 2025
Executive Sponsor	Vice-President, Academic and Provost	Next Review Date	December 3, 2028
Approved By	President and CEO	Frequency of Review	Every 3 Years

### 1. POLICY STATEMENT

Medicine Hat College (MHC) is committed to addressing and preventing gender based and sexual violence and creating safe and positive spaces. Gender based and sexual violence is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This policy states MHC's position and response; ensuring those who have experienced gender based and sexual violence are heard, their rights are respected, and that investigation processes protect the rights of all involved.

### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of the MHC Community with respect to behavior, understanding impacts, and accessing support.

This policy complements and works in conjunction with other MHC policies and does not override any collective agreements or prevailing laws.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

- **Academic and Workplace Accommodations:** for the purpose of this policy, academic and workplace accommodations is an umbrella term for accommodations to learning or working environments, tasks, or procedures in relation to one's experience of gender based or sexual violence.
- **Accommodation:** a change to a rule, approach, or environment to meet the needs of an individual and allow them to engage in a process. Typically, accommodations are provided in relation to protected grounds identified under human rights legislation, but in cases of gender based and sexual violence, accommodation may be in relation to the impact of violence and trauma.
- **Consent:** a voluntary agreement to engage in a behaviour or activity, given either before or during the activity. This agreement is informed, active, direct, voluntary, ongoing, and a conscious choice. Consent cannot be obtained through the abuse of a position of power, trust, or authority and cannot be given on behalf of another person. A person can withdraw consent at any point during the activity, and such withdrawal must be respected; however, withdrawing consent does not retroactively undo an activity that has already taken place.
- **Disclosure:** when an individual shares information about an experience of gender based or sexual violence to someone who did not previously know.
- **Gender Based Violence:** any violence, physical or psychological, that is committed, threatened, or attempted against another individual without the individual's consent by targeting gender, gender identity, or gender expression, including but not limited to sexist, homophobic, and/or transphobic comments, jokes, and images.

- **Harm-Reduction:** a recognition that the processes used to address gender based and sexual violence can cause additional harm in themselves and a set of practices that, wherever possible, seek to limit and reduce the negative consequences of gender based and sexual violence and related processes on the involved parties.
- **MHC Community:** MHC students, employees, volunteers, visitors, contractors, tenants, and members of the Board of Governors, when in MHC learning, working, social, or residence environments.
- **MHC Learning Environment:** the physical and virtual space where learning takes place including, but not limited, to classrooms, hallways, common areas, labs, digital learning resources such as Blackboard, work-integrated learning locations including practicum and clinical locations, all social media platforms, and other spaces on campus.
- **MHC Residence Environment:** the physical and virtual space associated exclusively with college operated residential facilities. This includes, but is not limited to, residence buildings, shared living spaces, hallways, residence-specific digital platforms, and any organized activities or gatherings that occur within or are organized by the MHC Student Residence Office. This definition does not extend to non-MHC affiliated off-campus housing.
- **MHC Social Environment:** the physical and virtual space where members of the MHC community gather and interact for social and/or recreational reasons. This includes but is not limited to on-campus common areas, recreational facilities, hallways, all social media platforms, and any form of gathering with an identifiable and substantial connection to MHC.
- **MHC Working Environment :** the physical and virtual space where an employee performs work duties and interacts with others which includes, but is not limited to offices, hallways, common areas, classrooms/labs/shops, digital communication platforms such as Microsoft Teams, work-integrated learning locations, all social media platforms, and other spaces on campus.
- **Sexual Assault:** any sexual contact without consent, which can include but is not limited to oral contact, groping or fondling, vaginal or anal penetration, and oral to genitalia contact. The behaviour need not be intentional to be considered sexual assault.
- **Sexual Harassment:** one or more unwanted or demeaning remarks, behaviours, or communications of a sexual nature and/or based on sex, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation, where the individual responsible for the remarks, behaviours, or communications knows or ought to reasonably know that these are unwanted or demeaning. This includes but is not limited to requests or demands of a sexual nature, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism, touching of non-sexual body parts, creating, acquiring, or distributing sexual images or videos.
- **Sexual Violence:** an umbrella term that includes sexual harassment and sexual assault.
- **Student:** for the purposes of this policy, the following individuals are considered to be students:
  - applicants to MHC programs,
  - individuals currently enrolled in MHC programs or courses,
  - individuals who have been enrolled in the past, but not currently active, and are making a disclosure or formal complaint under this policy related to a previous experience, and
  - alumni making a disclosure or formal complaint under this policy related to a previous experience.
- **Survivor:** there are many terms that may be used in relation to a person who has experienced gender based or sexual violence. Individuals might be familiar with the term victim or prefer the

term complainant as a neutral term. Some who have experienced gender based or sexual violence may choose to identify as a survivor, as an indication of having overcome the experience rather than being victimized by it. MHC uses the term ‘survivor’ throughout the policy and related disclosure procedure where it applies to those who have experienced gender based or sexual violence. It is the prerogative of the person who has experienced these circumstances to determine how they wish to identify. While survivor and complainant have the same meaning in the execution of this policy, for the purposes of internal investigations, the survivor will be referred to as the ‘complainant’. Use of the term survivor does not indicate an assumption of guilt of an individual.

- **Trauma-Informed Practices:** trauma-informed refers to acknowledging the harm that all parties involved in gender based or sexual violence may have endured, and awareness that trauma impacts an individual’s emotional, cognitive, physical, and sexual well-being. Trauma-informed practices are approaches based in harm-reduction, avoiding re-traumatization, power consciousness, and providing dignity. This also includes providing support and training for those involved in the investigation process to reduce the impacts of trauma exposure.

#### 4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

##### 4.1 MHC recognizes and acknowledges that

- Gender based and sexual violence can happen to and be committed by individuals regardless of race, religious or spiritual belief, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, and sexual orientation.

Individuals hold multiple social identities and that the intersection of these identities, including those mentioned above contribute to ways in which gender based and sexual violence will be experienced uniquely by each individual and that each case will need to be assessed for individual impacts and to remove barriers to support.

- Gender based and sexual violence is rooted in systemic oppression, including colonialism, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and ableism. This systemic oppression manifests in a culture in which common attitudes, norms, and practices tolerate, normalize, trivialize, excuse, or outright condone gender based and sexual violence (one term for this is rape culture). As an institution that exists within this culture, MHC takes its responsibility to address systemic oppression and rape culture seriously.
- Indigenous women, girls, two-spirit, and LGBTQIA+ people are disproportionately subjected to gender based and sexual violence, as identified in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, as an ongoing impact of colonialism and related forms of systemic oppression. Indigenous men are also disproportionately subjected to violence, including gender based and sexual violence, as a result of colonialism and related forms of systemic oppression.
- Individuals who have experienced gender based and sexual violence may experience emotional, academic, workplace, or other difficulties as a result.

#### 5. PRINCIPLES

##### 5.1 MHC is committed to

- Creating and maintaining a healthy and safe learning, working, social, and residence environments. Reported incidents of gender based and sexual violence will be taken

seriously, and the college will respond in alignment with MHC’s policies, procedures, and relevant collective agreements as applicable.

- Maintaining a campus free of discrimination, harassment, and violence and fostering an atmosphere of respectful attitudes and behaviours towards sexuality, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and gender expression. Behaviours that contribute to a hostile and inequitable learning, working, social, or residence environment are not accepted and will be addressed by the appropriate policy and/or procedure and practices.
- Supporting survivors and those involved in working with persons who have experienced gender based and sexual violence in their efforts to heal through established college practices.

5.2 Those who have been impacted by gender based and sexual violence will be provided with information regarding resources and supports available both at the college or in the community, the provision of or referral to counselling where applicable, information about reporting options, and appropriate academic and workplace accommodations.

5.3 The survivor’s right to privacy will be respected while evaluating the obligation to protect the safety and well-being of the broader MHC community. Confidentiality will be respected wherever possible. Those involved will be treated with fairness, compassion, and respect for their dignity.

5.4 MHC will uphold the principles of procedural fairness and provide an environment where the rights of all are respected, authorities act without bias, all parties are provided with a fair process, and proceedings are carried out in good faith.

Trauma may be a factor for all parties involved in gender based and sexual violence and as a result may impact memory, communication, and behaviour in ways that can interfere with fair processes if not addressed. MHC will apply trauma-informed and other harm-reduction practices in relation to gender based and sexual violence.

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Kevin Shufflebotham  
President and CEO  
Date: December 3, 2025

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Nancy Brown  
Vice-President, Academic and Provost  
Date: December 3, 2025

<b>Additional Information</b>	<b>Location</b>
SD 4.1 GBSV Disclosures and Support Procedure	MHC Website & SharePoint Policy Page
SD 4.2 GBSV Complaint Procedure	MHC Website & SharePoint Policy Page
RWLE Policy and Procedures	MHC Website & SharePoint Policy Page
Workplace Relationships Policy	MHC Website & SharePoint Policy Page
Occupational Health & Safety Policy	MHC Website & SharePoint Policy Page
Code of Conduct Policy	MHC Website & SharePoint Policy Page
SNAM Policy and Procedures	MHC Website & SharePoint Policy Page