

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

POLICY

CODE: A 3.5

The London District Catholic School Board is committed to maintaining Christ-centred, safe, inclusive and accepting schools and workplaces, free from bullying and other forms of aggression.

Consistent with the Safe Schools Act and the London District Catholic School Board Code of Conduct, all students, staff, parents, and community members will demonstrate respect for others and contribute to a shared responsibility to create and maintain Christ-Centred, safe and caring schools free from bullying.

PURPOSE

Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum (“PPM”) 144 defines school climate as the learning environment and relationships found within a school and school community. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included, and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions. Principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in the learning environment to support a positive school climate and a culture of mutual respect. A positive school climate is a crucial component of bullying prevention.

APPLICATION AND SCOPE

Building and sustaining a positive school climate is a complex challenge requiring evidence-informed solutions. A whole-school approach involving all education and community partners is needed to bring about systemic change.

1.0 PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 Students, staff members, and parents feel safe, and are safe, included, and accepted.
- 1.2 All members of the school community demonstrate respect, fairness, and kindness in their interactions, building healthy relationships that are free from discrimination and harassment.
- 1.3 Students are encouraged and given support to be positive leaders and role models in their school community.
- 1.4 Open and ongoing dialogue takes place between the principal, staff members, parents, and students. All partners are actively engaged.
- 1.5 The learning environment, instructional materials, and teaching and assessment strategies reflect the diversity of all learners.
- 1.6 Every student is inspired and given support to succeed in an environment of high expectations.

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- 1.7 Bullying prevention and awareness-raising strategies for students and staff are reinforced through curriculum-linked programs.
- 1.8 Consistent with our Catholic faith and in the spirit of a culture of Belonging, the London District Catholic School Board reiterates the principles that:
- Bullying adversely affects a student's well-being and ability to learn.
 - Bullying adversely affects healthy relationships and the school climate.
 - Bullying adversely affects a school's ability to educate its students.
 - Bullying will not be accepted on school property, at school-related activities, on school buses, or in any other circumstances (e.g. online) where engaging in bullying will have a negative impact on the school climate.

2.0 REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Definition of Bullying

The *Education Act* (and PPM 144), define "bullying" as an aggressive and typically repeated physical, verbal, electronic, written, or other behaviour by a pupil where:

- a) the behaviour is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behaviour would likely to have the effect of:
 - (i) causing harm, fear or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social or academic harm, harm to the individual's reputation or harm to the individual's property, or
 - (ii) creating a negative environment at school for another individual, and
- b) the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the pupil and the individual based on factors such as size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, disability, or the receipt of special education.

For purposes of the definition of "bullying", behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

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2.2 Definition of Cyber-Bullying

Cyber-bullying is a distinct form of bullying through electronic means that includes:

- a) creating a web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
- b) impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the Internet; and
- c) communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.

2.3 Impact of Bullying

Research shows that bullying is a serious issue that has far-reaching consequences for individuals, their families and peers, and the community at large. A clearly articulated school-wide bullying prevention policy is the foundation of effective bullying prevention programming in Catholic schools. Bullying prevention programming should include:

- early intervention for both the child who is a victim of bullying and the child who bullies
- a safe and positive learning environment that is supportive of student achievement and well-being
- the development of positive relationships among staff, among students, and between staff and students to promote a safe environment and a positive school climate

If students who are bullied, who bully others, or who witness bullying receive the necessary support, they can learn effective strategies for interacting positively with others and for promoting positive peer dynamics. Administrators, teachers, other school staff and parents need to be provided with opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to address bullying through school-level bullying prevention and intervention strategies that focus on building skills for healthy relationships.

2.4 Prevention and Awareness Raising

The Board has a comprehensive prevention and awareness-raising strategy that includes the Board Code of Conduct (Policy J 5.5), that sets expectations for appropriate student behaviour. The prevention and awareness-raising strategy also includes teaching approaches that support school-wide bullying prevention and awareness. The focus is on healthy relationships that highlight equity and inclusive education principles throughout the Catholic curriculum in daily classroom instruction and school activities. Schools need to provide opportunities for all students to participate in equity and inclusive education, bullying prevention, and leadership initiatives.

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In addition to the above, the Board will undertake the following initiatives:

Belonging/School Climate Surveys

As required by PPM 144 Bullying Prevention and Intervention, the Board is required to conduct anonymous Belonging/School Climate Surveys of students, staff, and parents at least once every two years. These surveys must include questions on bullying/harassment related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, as well as questions on sexual harassment. The principal will provide information from the Belonging/School Climate Surveys to the Belonging/Safe and Healthy School Team for review and input into the School Belonging Plan. The results of the Belonging/School Climate Survey will be shared with the school community.

The Board will inform parents that the Belonging/School Climate Surveys are voluntary and they can choose to not have their child participate in the process. The Board will not collect any name or identifying number, symbol, or other particular assigned to a person, in accordance with subsection 169.1 (2.2) of the Education Act.

Board and School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plans

The Board will establish a bullying prevention and intervention plan for the schools of the board, and require that all schools implement the board's plan in accordance with the Education Act. When establishing its plan, the views of students, teachers, principals, and other staff of the Board, volunteers working in the schools, parents, school councils, and the community will be solicited as required by the Education Act. The views of the Board Special Education Advisory Committee, the Indigenous Education Committee, District Catholic School Council Parent Involvement Committee and student cabinet will also be solicited, along with community partners (e.g. social service agencies; mental health agencies; and other appropriate community groups).

The plan must be made available to the public on both the Board and schools' websites. The bullying prevention and intervention plan must be reviewed every two years, and be consistent with the policies in PPM 144.

2.5 Programs, Interventions, and Other Supports

As required by the Education Act, the Board provides programs, interventions, or other supports for students who have been bullied, students who have witnessed incidents of bullying, and students who have engaged in bullying. The programs, interventions, and other supports may be provided by social workers, psychologists, or other professionals who have training in similar fields, as determined by the Board.

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Strategies in Support of Bullying Prevention and Intervention

- Schools will establish programs, such as bullying prevention and citizenship development, as well as positive activities designed to promote the building of healthy relationships and appropriate behaviour.
- Schools will focus on prevention and early intervention as a key to maintaining a positive school environment in which students can learn.
- Schools will develop prevention measures and initiatives that include the whole school and all aspects of school life.
- A positive “school climate” is a crucial component of prevention; it may be defined as the learning environment and relationships found within a school and school community. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included, and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions. Principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in the learning environment to support a positive school climate and a culture of mutual respect. A positive school climate is a crucial component of the prevention of inappropriate behaviour." (PPM 144)
- Teaching Strategies
 - (i) Teaching strategies will support the school-wide bullying prevention strategies
 - (ii) Teaching strategies will focus on developing healthy relationships by including bullying prevention throughout the curriculum in daily classroom teaching.
 - (iii) In every grade, curriculum expectations will include bullying prevention strategies such as conflict resolution and peer mediation. Teachers must be aware of these links and use them to promote tolerance, respect and empathy, all of which are important components of bullying prevention.

Opportunities for Bullying Prevention Training

- All students will have the opportunity to participate in bullying prevention training and leadership initiatives within their own school.
- In addition to teachers and administrators, other staff, such as educational assistants, social workers, school support staff, attendance counsellors, and other members of the community all play an important role in supporting students and contributing to a positive learning and teaching environment.
- A positive school climate also includes the participation of the school community, including parents, as well as the broader community.

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Intervention Strategies

- Intervention to stop bullying is a community responsibility including school administrators, teachers, Board professional staff, parents, students, parish teams and community agencies.
- The goal of intervention measures is to stop incidences of bullying and to foster a positive learning and teaching environment that supports academic achievement to all students and that helps students reach their full potential.
- Intervention will be consistent with a progressive discipline approach that utilizes a continuum of supports and consequences to address inappropriate student behaviour and builds upon strategies that promotes positive behaviour.
- Intervention strategies range from early interventions to more intensive interventions in cases of persistent bullying, with possible referral to community or social service agencies.
- Ongoing intervention may be necessary to sustain and promote positive student behaviour.
- Information about reporting incidences of bullying safely and in a way that will minimize the possibility of reprisal will be provided to students and parents.

2.6 Roles and Responsibilities

Bullying prevention requires input and participation from everyone in the school community. All stakeholders have a role to play to prevent bullying.

Principal

In addressing bullying prevention and intervention, the principal will take a leadership role in the school. They will provide leadership by:

- demonstrating care for the school community and a commitment to academic excellence in a safe, inclusive and accepting teaching and learning environment;
- holding everyone under their authority accountable for their behaviour and actions;
- empowering students to be positive leaders in their school and community;
- communicating regularly and meaningfully with all members of their school community;

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- ensuring the communication of local bullying prevention policies includes a communication plan that outlines how these provisions will be made clear to the entire school community, including school communities who have a significant number of parents whose first language is not English; and
- providing an example of respect and civility for all members of the school community.

Teachers and Other School Staff Members

Under the leadership of their principals, teachers and other school staff members maintain order in the school and are expected to hold everyone to the highest standard of respectful and responsible behaviour. As role models, teachers and school staff uphold these high standards when they:

- help students work to their full potential and develop their sense of self-worth;
- empower students to be positive leaders in their classroom, school, and community;
- communicate regularly and meaningfully with parents;
- maintain consistent standards of behaviours for all students;
- demonstrate respect for all students, staff, parents, volunteers, and the members of the school community;
- prepare students for the full responsibility of citizenship.

Teachers shall also assist principals in maintaining close co-operation with the school community and in establishing and maintaining consistent disciplinary practices in the school. In addition, teachers must assist the principals by reporting incidents of bullying and assisting the principal in conducting an investigation.

Parents

As primary caregivers and original role models for their children, and as partners in Catholic Education, parents play an important role in the education of their children and have a responsibility to support the school community in maintaining a Christ-centred, safe and respectful learning environment for all members.

Parents fulfill their role when they:

- Are actively engaged in their child's school work and progress, social development and faith development;

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- Communicate regularly with the school;
- Read and familiarize themselves with information provided by the school regarding Ministry, Board, and School Policies;
- Support and model behaviour outlined in Ministry, Board and/or School Policy by demonstrating respect for all students, staff, volunteers, other parents and members of the community;
- Assist school staff in dealing with discipline issues involving their child.

Parents also assist Staff and Principals through representation on local Catholic School Councils and participation in reviewing and supporting the school's Code of Conduct and Safe School's Policy.

Students

Ideally, bullying prevention strategies will engage students to examine their own behaviour as the party engaging in bullying behaviour, or by-stander, and commit to a shared mission of Christ-centred, safe and healthy schools free from bullying.

Bullying prevention strategies will also support students who are victims by examining strategies that can help them to positively address bullying behaviour.

Students must demonstrate respect for themselves, for others, and for the responsibilities of citizenship through acceptable behaviour. Respect and responsibility are demonstrated when a student:

- fulfills the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations and lives the Gospel message;
- comes to school prepared, on time, and ready to learn;
- shows respect for themselves, for others, and for those in authority;
- refrains from bringing anything to school that may compromise the safety of others; and
- follows the established rules and take responsibility for his or her own actions.

Students are also expected to:

- practice kindness in their daily lives
- exercise self-discipline;
- accept such discipline as would be exercised by a kind, firm and judicious parent;
- be courteous to fellow pupils and obedient and courteous of teachers;

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- show respect for school property; and
- understand and comply with their school's code of conduct.

2.7 Training Strategies for Members of the School Community

Training programs regarding bullying prevention and intervention will be put in place for all administrators, teachers and educational assistants. This training will include cultural sensitivity, respect for diversity and special education needs. Training will be made available to all other adults that have significant contact with students, including, but not limited to, other school staff, school bus drivers and volunteers.

See Safe Schools Procedures for obligations to respond to and report inappropriate behaviour, including bullying.

2.8 Professional Development Strategies for Administrators, Teachers, and Other School Staff

The Board will establish and provide annual professional development programs to educate teachers and other school staff about bullying prevention and strategies for promoting a positive school climate. These strategies include those that are curriculum-linked, those that respond to all forms of bullying, information to new teachers, and resources to other adults with significant contact with students (e.g. school bus operators/drivers, volunteers, etc.).

2.9 Communication and Outreach Strategies

- This policy will be posted on the Board web site and communicated to principals, students, parents, teachers, committees of the Board, Catholic School Advisory Councils, the Indigenous Education Committee, Student Cabinet, volunteers and school bus operators or drivers and any other school staff;
- Members of the school community, including, but not limited to, principals, teachers, parents and students will be made aware of their roles and responsibilities under this policy;
- The Board will make every effort to share this information with parents whose first language is a language other than English.

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RELATED POLICES

Policy Code: A 3.3 - Safe Schools – Progressive Discipline, Suspensions and Appeals, Expulsion and Appeals
Policy Code: I 4.2 - Appropriate Use of Information, Communication and Network Technology
Policy Code: J 3.7 - Appropriate Use of Personal Electronic Devices and Online Social Networking
Policy Code: J 5.5 - Board Code of Conduct

RELATED ACTS AND MINISTRY OF EDUCATION DOCUMENTS

Guide to the Release of Student Information and Protection of Privacy Act RSO 1990
Education Act
Criminal Code of Canada
Occupational Health and Safety Act
Ontario Human Rights Code
Youth Criminal Justice Act
Policy/Program Memorandum 128 – The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct
Policy/Program Memorandum 144 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention
Policy/Program Memorandum 145 – Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour
Policy/Program Memorandum 149 – Protocol for Partnerships with External Agencies for Provision of Services by Regulated Health Professionals, Regulated Social Service Professionals, and Paraprofessionals
Policy/Program Memorandum 159 – Collaborative Professionalism
Policy/Program Memorandum 119 – Equity and Inclusive Education

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Consistent with the Safe Schools Act and the London District Catholic School Board Code of Conduct, all students, staff, parents and community members will demonstrate respect for others and contribute to a shared responsibility to create and maintain Christ-centred, safe, caring and accepting schools free from bullying.

Adopted: January 28, 2008

Revised: February 4, 2019