



OTTAWA  
CATHOLIC  
SCHOOL BOARD

# POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## **POLICY: Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools Code of Conduct -- Bullying, Intimidation, Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Threats**

**Date Approved:** April 27, 1999

**Last Reviewed:** 2018-2019

**Dates of Amendment:** February 12, 2008; June 25, 2013; June 21, 2019

**Cross Reference:** [Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools Code of Conduct – General](#); [Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools Code of Conduct – Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour](#)

### **POLICY:**

1. In keeping with the Board's commitment to provide a safe, inclusive and accepting environment in its schools, behaviour which jeopardizes the emotional wellbeing or physical safety of students or staff shall not be tolerated. Therefore, it is the goal of the Board to eliminate bullying, intimidation, harassment and threats from every aspect of school life. In recognition of this, the Board adopts the following as working definitions:
  - a. **Bullying:** Aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a pupil where:
    - i. the behaviour is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behaviour would be likely to have the effect of 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. the behaviour is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behaviour would be likely to have the effect of, creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, and
    - iii. 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

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identity, gender expression, race, disability or the receipt of special education.

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

- b. **Cyber-bullying:** For the purposes of the definition of “bullying”, bullying includes bullying by electronic means (commonly known as cyber-bullying), including:
- i. creation of a web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
  - ii. impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet; and
  - iii. communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.
- c. **Intimidation:** To frighten, discourage or inhibit by the use of verbal or non-verbal actions in order to influence conduct.
- d. **Harassment:** A single or ongoing communication in any form (i.e., verbal or physical abuse, jokes, slurs, symbols, graffiti, etc.). It involves negative attitudes, beliefs or actions, that are known to be unwanted or unwelcome, towards an individual or group.
- e. **Criminal Harassment:** A person commits criminal harassment when:
- i. he/she repeatedly follows an individual from place to place or repeatedly communicates, directly or indirectly, by any means (including electronic means), with an individual, or watches the home or place of work of an individual, or engages in threatening conduct directed at a person or a member of that person’s family; and
  - ii. the victim of the criminal harassment is caused to reasonably, in the circumstances, fear for his or her safety.
- f. **Sexual Harassment:** One or a series of comments or conduct of a gender-related or

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sexual nature that is known or might reasonably be known to be unwelcome/unwanted, offensive, intimidating, inappropriate or hostile.

- g. **Uttering threats:** Everyone commits an offence who, in any manner, knowingly utters, conveys or causes any person to receive a threat:
- i. to cause death or bodily harm to any person;
  - ii. to burn, destroy or damage real or personal property; or
  - iii. to kill, poison or injure an animal that is the property of any person.

2. Any form of discriminatory harassment perpetrated by any student in the school, whether intentional or unintentional, shall be condemned as unacceptable.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES :**

The following procedures may be superseded depending upon the seriousness of the violation and, where warranted, will lead to expulsion.

1. Where a student acts in violation of the policy, the principal will:
  - a. Inform the student of the behaviour that is in violation of the policy and that progressive disciplinary action will be taken upon further violations of the policy;
  - b. Communicate with the student's parent or guardian (unless the student is 18 or older, or 16 or 17 and has withdrawn him/herself from parental control) and inform him/her of:
    - i. the nature of the activity;
    - ii. the nature of any harm to any other student(s);
    - iii. the nature of any disciplinary measures taken in response to the activity;
    - iv. the supports that will be provided for the student in response to his or her

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- engagement in the activity;
  - v. his/her right to have a discussion with the principal about the supports that will be provided for his/her child.
  - c. Communicate with the parent or guardian of any student harmed by the incident (unless the student is 18 or older, or 16 or 17 and has withdrawn him/herself from parental control) and inform him/her of:
    - i. the nature of the activity that resulted in harm to the student;
    - ii. the nature of the harm to the student;
    - iii. the steps taken to protect the safety of the student(s), including the nature of any disciplinary measures taken in response to the activity;
    - iv. the supports that will be provided for the student in response to the harm that resulted from the activity;
    - v. his/her right to have a discussion with the principal about the supports that will be provided for his/her child.
  - d. Consider any mitigating and other factors as set out in the Progressive Discipline Policy;
  - e. Contact the police in the event of either criminal harassment or a threat of serious physical injury, including threats made on social networking sites or through instant messaging, text messaging, email, and so on; (as per the directions contained in *Protocol to Accompany Safe Schools Policies in the City of Ottawa*).
2. A principal shall not notify a parent/guardian of a student if, in the opinion of the principal, doing so would put the student at risk of harm from a parent/guardian of the student, such that notification is not in the student's best interest. If the principal decides not to notify a parent/guardian of a student involved in the incident based on these grounds, the principal will document the rationale for this decision, and share this decision with the Family of Schools supervisory officer and, if applicable, the teacher who made the report on the

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incident.

3. After consideration of mitigating and other factors, the principal may:
  - a. Suspend the student for a period of 1 to 20 days, depending upon the seriousness of the incident;
  - b. Suspend the student immediately and initiate a Principal's Investigation to determine whether an expulsion is warranted in cases where the use of a weapon is threatened;
  - c. Suspend the student and initiate a Principal's Investigation to determine whether an expulsion is warranted if a student engages in bullying and:
    - i. the pupil has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying; and
    - ii. the pupil's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person.
  - d. Suspend the student and initiate a Principal's Investigation to determine whether an expulsion is warranted if the intimidation, harassment, or threat is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other similar factor;
  - e. Check "Violent Incident" box on the Suspension Supplementary form, if applicable;
  - f. Consider alternative learning placement and/or programs for such student and facilitate the transition where required.
4. In all cases of intimidation, harassment, and/or threats, the principal will consider a referral of the victim to a school chaplaincy leader, counselor, social worker, psychologist, or recommend that he/she seek assistance from an external agency to assist the victim in overcoming any trauma associated with the incident.