

APG# SS11: Bullying Prevention and Intervention

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PREAMBLE

The Sudbury Catholic District School Board is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, accepting, and nurturing learning and teaching environment rooted in Gospel values. We recognize that relationships are founded in mutual acceptance and inclusion, and when modelled by all, a culture of respect becomes the norm.

PURPOSE

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.

Definitions

“**Bullying**” means aggressive and typically repeated behavior by a pupil where,

- a) the behavior is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behavior 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
 - creating a negative environment at a school for another individual,
- a) the behavior 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;

Bullying

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

Cyber-bullying

For the purposes of the definition of “bullying” in subsection (1), bullying includes bullying by electronic means (commonly known as cyber-bullying), including:

- a) creating a web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identify of another person.;
- b) impersonating another person as the author or 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.

Aggressive behaviour

Aggressive behaviour may be intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect. It can take many forms, including physical, verbal, and social. If aggressive behaviour is physical, it may include hitting, pushing, slapping, and tripping. If it is verbal, it may include name calling, mocking, insults, threats, and sexist, racist, homophobic, or transphobic comments. If it is social, or relational, aggression, it is more subtle and may involve such behaviours as gossiping, spreading rumours, excluding others from a group, humiliating others with public gestures or graffiti, and shunning or ignoring. Social aggression may also occur through the use of technology (e.g., spreading rumours, images, or hurtful comments through the use of e-mail, cell phones, text messaging, websites, social networking, or other technology).

In the course of a day, there are many “teachable moments” when issues appear to arise. Prompt intervention with a few moments of coaching and support at these critical times can help all children and youth, including those who may be at risk, to develop the skills and understanding that they need to maintain positive relationships with others. Such interactions that students have with their teachers, other school staff, and fellow students, as well as with principals, vice-principals, their parents, and others, can be used to help them improve their social skills.

IMPLEMENTATION

Prevention and Awareness Raising

All schools within the Sudbury Catholic District School Board will:

- develop a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan that addresses school needs which have been identified through voluntary school climate surveys. Progress will be monitored by the principal and the Safe and Accepting School Team.
- participate in annual professional development.
- participate in the Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week beginning the third Sunday of November each year.

Programs, Interventions and Other Supports

The Board acknowledges the importance of actively promoting and supporting appropriate and positive student behaviors that contribute to and sustain a safe learning and teaching environment in which every student can reach his or her full potential.

SCDSB supports the comprehensive intervention strategies to address incidents of bullying. This includes appropriate and timely responses to inappropriate behavior, as well as establishing expectations for appropriate student behaviour in each of our schools.

All those who have been bullied, students who have witnessed incidents of bullying and students who have engaged in bullying, will be provided individualized support. This may include referral to community-based service providers.

Programs and activities that focus on the building of healthy relationships, inclusive and equitable learning environments, character development, and positive peer relations all provide the foundation for an effective continuum of strategies within a school and school-related activities. Examples are as follows:

- Board Social Worker
- Child and Youth Worker
- VTRA (Violent Threat Risk Assessment)
- Policy / School Partnerships and Programs
- Roots of Empathy
- Virtues Programming
- Indigenous and Multicultural Programs and Awareness

- Peer Mediation
- Fully Alive Curriculum
- Conflict Management Programs i.e. Kelso and Friends, Unity in Community (Primary/Junior)
- Cyber Bullying Programs (Intermediate/Senior)
- Intervention Support Resource for Teachers (K-12)
- Indigenous Education Support Workers
- Mental Health Support Plan
- Friends
- SNAP
- Zones of Regulation

Each school is to develop and maintain a mechanism for students to safely report bullying.

Notifying Parents

Section 300.3 of the Education Act specifies when principals are required to notify the parents of students who have been harmed as the result of a serious student incident. Principals shall disclose the following information:

- the nature of the activity that resulted in harm to the student
- the nature of the harm to the student
- the steps taken to protect the student's safety, including the nature of any disciplinary measures taken in response to the activity
- the supports that will be provided for the student in response to the harm that resulted from the activity.

This section of the act now also specifies that principals are required to notify the parents of the students who have engaged in serious student incidents. Principals shall disclose the following information:

- the nature of the activity that resulted in harm to the other student
- the nature of the harm to the other student
- the nature of any disciplinary measures taken in response to the activity
- the supports that will be provided for the student in response to his or her engagement in the activity.

When notifying parents of these incidents, the principal must invite parents to have a discussion with him or her about the supports that will be provided for their child.

Under subsection 300.3(3) of the Education Act, a principal shall not notify a parent of a student if, in the opinion of the principal, doing so would put the student at risk of harm from a parent of the student, such that notification is not in the student's best interest. Under subsection 301(5.5) of the Education Act, when principals have decided not to notify the parents that their child was involved in a serious student incident, as described above, they must, in accordance with Ontario Regulation 472/07, document the rationale for this decision and notify both the teacher who reported the incident and the appropriate supervisory officer of this decision.

Principals shall also, if they determine it is appropriate to do so, inform other board employees of this decision.

In addition, principals should refer students to board resources or to a community-based service provider that can provide the appropriate type of confidential support when his or her parents are not called (i.e. counselling; a sexual assault centre; Kids Help Phone; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered Youth Line).

In circumstances where board employees have reason to believe that a student may be in need of protection, board employee **must** call a Children's Aid Society according to the requirements of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act 2017.

Reporting to the Principal

The purpose of reporting serious student incidents is to ensure that the principal is aware of any activities taking place in the school for which suspension or expulsion must be considered and to help ensure a positive school climate.

- Section 300.2 of Part XIII of the Education Act states that an employee of the board who becomes aware that a student at a school of the board may have engaged in a serious student incident shall report the matter to the principal as soon as reasonably possible. The employee must consider the safety of others and the urgency of the situation in reporting the incident, but, in any case, must report it to the principal no later than the end of the school day.
- In cases where an immediate action is required, a verbal report to the principal may be made. A written report must be made when it is safe to do so.
- In certain situations, members of the College of Psychologists of Ontario or the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers who are engaged in a clinical relationship with a student shall report incidents of behavior for which suspension or expulsion must be considered to the principal as soon as it is, in their professional opinion, reasonably possible to do so without having a negative impact on the nature of the clinical relationship, in accordance with section 300.2 of Part XIII of the Education Act. They shall also report, in a manner that is consistent with the code of ethics and the standards of practice of their respective professions, matters that could result in the student's doing physical, emotional, or psychological harm to themselves or to others.
- All employee reports made to the principal, including those made verbally, must be confirmed in writing, using the "Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part 1". This form has been modified by the board, but retains the elements set out by the Ministry. Where the principal is the sole witness to an incident, the principal is similarly required to use the reporting form to confirm in writing what he or she witnessed. The Board has specified on this form any other activities for which a student may be suspended or expelled according to board policy. Each report is assigned a number for filing and retrieval purposes.
- The board will provide information to board employees on completing the safe schools incident reporting forms.
- The principal must investigate all reports submitted by board employees, as outlined in subsection 300.2(3) of the Education Act. Once the investigation is complete, the principal must communicate the results of the investigation to the teacher who made the report. If a board employee who is not a teacher made the report, the principal will communicate the results of the investigation to that employee if the principal considers it appropriate. Communication between the principal and school staff about the investigation and the results of the investigation is a shared responsibility and is an important factor in meeting student needs and fostering collaboration in the school.
- The principal must not disclose more personal information than is reasonably necessary for the purpose of communicating the results of the investigation, in accordance with subsection 300.2(5) of the Education Act. This information must be provided in a timely manner so that school staff can work with the principal to best meet the needs of students, support a positive school climate, and help prevent future inappropriate behavior from taking place.
- In all cases, the principal must provide the employee who reported the incident with written acknowledgement, using the "Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part II". This form has been modified by the Board, but still retains the elements set out by the Ministry and must specify whether the investigation has been completed or is still in progress. If no further action is taken by the principal, the principal is not required to retain the report. Information that could identify the student(s) involved must not be part of the acknowledgement.

- In addition to employees of the board, third parties, specified below, who are under contract or agreement with the board are required to report such incidents in writing to the principal of the school. The requirements for boards are as follows:
 - The Board is required to include reporting requirements for school bus drivers in their transportation policies and contracts.
- The Board is required to include reporting requirements for employees and contractors as a condition in their agreements with third-party operators who are providing before- and/or after-school programs for children in Kindergarten to Grade 6, in accordance with section 28 of Ontario Regulation 221/11. These reporting requirements apply to employees or contractors of the operator who, in the normal course of providing the program, regularly come into direct contact with children enrolled in the third-party program
- Early childhood educators in board-operated extended-day programs, as well as employees and contractors of third-party operators as described above, must report to the principal as soon as reasonably possible. Boards are expected to provide information to these third-party operators on how to complete the “Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part 1”.
- All other individuals who are not employees of the board and who come into direct contact with students on a regular basis, as outlined in subsection 302(3.1) of the Education Act are to report such matters to the principal.
- If the principal has decided that action must be taken as a result of an incident of bullying, he or she will file a copy of the reporting form with documentation indicating the action taken in the OSR of the student whose behavior was inappropriate. The names of all other students that appear on the form – both students who have engaged in bullying and students who have been harmed – must be removed from the form before it is filed in the student’s OSR.
- Where the principal has taken action in the case of more than one student, a copy of the reporting form with documentation indicating the action taken must be filed in the OSR of each student whose behavior was inappropriate. The names of all other students that appear on the form – both students who have engaged in bullying and students who have been harmed – must be removed from the form before it is filed.
- In the case of the student who has been harmed, no information about the incident must be placed in his or her OSR, unless that student’s parents expressly request that it be placed in the OSR.
- In situations where the student who has been bullied has also engaged in a serious student incident, information regarding the incident and the action taken will be placed in the student’s OSR.
- The form and documentation must be kept in the OSR for a minimum of one year.
- Beginning in 2018, the form will be filled electronically and is only printed if a suspension or expulsion was the result.

Professional Development Strategies for Administrators, Teachers, and other School Staff

SCDSB 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, in accordance with subsection 170(1) of the Education Act.

SCDSB will put in place curriculum-linked training strategies on bullying prevention and intervention to give all administrators, teachers, and other school staff the resources and support they need. The strategies include ways of responding to all forms of bullying, Sudbury Catholic makes resources

available to other adults who have significant contact with students (e.g., school bus operators/drivers, volunteers). The Board recognizes the ongoing need to support training for new teachers.

Communication and Outreach Strategies

To support a whole-school approach, boards must actively communicate their policies and guidelines on bullying prevention and intervention to principals, teachers, and other school staff; students; parents; their Special Education Advisory Committee; school councils; and school bus operators and drivers. Boards should also provide this information to their Parent Involvement Committee, their Indigenous Education Advisory Council, and other appropriate community partners.

It is important that the roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community (e.g., principals, teachers, other school staff, students, parents) be clearly articulated and understood.

Parents play a key role in the development of safe, inclusive, and accepting schools. When parents are engaged and involved in their children's education, everyone benefits, and our schools become increasingly rich and positive places to teach, learn, and grow.

Boards should make every effort to provide access to appropriate board resources/ publications for parents (taking into account linguistic, ethnocultural, and accessibility considerations) and to expand opportunities to support teachers in addressing bullying issues.

Monitoring and Revising

The Board will monitor, review, and evaluate the effectiveness of board policies and guidelines, using indicators established in consultation with teachers, other school staff, students, parents, school councils, their Special Education Advisory Committee, and community-based service providers. Boards may also consult with their Parent Involvement Committees. Boards will also conduct a cyclical review of their policies and guidelines in a timely manner.

Safe and Accepting School Team

Each school must have in place a Safe and Accepting School Team responsible for fostering a safe, inclusive, and accepting school climate that will reflect the social teachings of the Catholic Church and be responsible for school safety. Teams should include at least one student and must include at least one parent, one teacher, one non-teaching staff member, one community partner, and the principal. An existing school committee (i.e. the healthy schools committee) can assume this role. The chair of this team must be a staff member.