



Administrative Procedures Memorandum

#: APC034

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

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Memo To: All Staff

From: Director of Education

ACCESSIBILITY:

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PURPOSE:

The Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB) is committed to the establishment and maintenance of safe, caring, equitable, and inclusive school environments in order to maximize the learning potential of all students and to ensure a positive school climate for all members of the school community.

Students and educators have the right to a safe, secure and inviting school environment free from all forms of harassment, bullying, threats and violence of any kind.

Bullying (physical, emotional, verbal, electronic) is a particularly insidious form of violence. It is destructive to a person's physical and social emotional health. It also has a negative impact on the climate and culture of a school. The WCDSB believes that all forms of bullying are unacceptable and subject to consequences.

The Ministry of Education has now added bullying as an infraction that must be dealt with as part of its review of the safe schools' initiative. School principals will use a restorative justice model as one strategy of intervention where appropriate. School districts are required to put policies and programs into place to address this serious issue.

Subsection 1(1) of the Education Act defines bullying stating "bullying" means aggressive and typically repeated 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 be 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 a 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;
- Bullying (1.0.0.1) For the purposes of the definition of "bullying" in subsection (1), behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

Cyber-bullying (1.0.0.2) 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 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.

The purpose of this Administrative Procedures Memorandum is to denounce bullying in any form because:

- Bullying adversely affects a student’s 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.

REFERENCES:

- [The Education Act and Regulation 472/07](#): Behaviour, Discipline and Safety of Students
- [Bill 157: Education Amendment Act](#) (Keeping Our Kids Safe at School, 2009)
- [Policy/Procedure Memorandum 144](#): Bullying Prevention and Intervention (December 5, 2012)
- [Policy/Program Memorandum No. 145](#): Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour (December 5, 2012)
- [Policy/Procedure Memorandum 119](#): Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario (April 22, 2013)
- [Policy/Procedure Memorandum 120](#): Reporting Violent Incidents
- [Policy/Procedure Memorandum 128](#): The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct (Ministry of Education)
- [Ontario Human Rights Code Bill 13](#): Accepting Schools Act
- [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#) (MFIPPA)
- [Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act](#) (PIPEDA)

FORMS:

- APC034-01F: [Safe Schools Incident Reporting Part I](#)
- APC034-02F: [Safe Schools Incident Response Part II](#)
- APC034-03F: [No Parent/Guardian Notification of Victim](#)

REPORTS:

- N/A.

APPENDICES:

- N/A.

COMMENTS AND GUIDELINES:

RESEARCH

Research shows that bullying is a serious issue that has far-reaching consequences for individuals, their families and peers, and the community at large. According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), almost one-third of students are being bullied at school and more than one-fifth of students report having bullied someone else.

Children who suffer prolonged victimization through bullying, as well as children who use power and aggression through bullying others, may experience a range of psycho-social problems that may extend into adolescence and adulthood. Both children who are bullied, and children who bully, are at risk for poor school functioning, in terms of poor attitudes towards school, low grades, and absenteeism (Rigby, 2003; Tremblay, 1999). Children who witness

bullying are also faced with social emotional costs including erosion of self-confidence and self-respect (Coloroso, 2002). In addition, there is new evidence to suggest that physiological changes may occur in the brain development of students who are bullied (Vaillancourt et al, 2011).

CONTEXT

Our Catholic Faith - born of God, founded in the model of Jesus Christ, and inspired by the Holy Spirit – offers two fundamental principles that form our understanding of healthy relationships. First, all people possess an essential dignity whose protection and promotion is the charge of the community. Second, we are social beings who find the fullness of our potential when we meaningfully participate in, and contribute to, the community.

These principles form the basis of all our relationships however, in a special way, Jesus fought for the weak and the marginalized. The Beatitudes, as proclaimed in Matthew (5.3-12), paints a vivid picture of Jesus' passion and support for those who suffer. Those who are poor, hungry, persecuted, mourn, are pure of heart and work for peace are constantly singled out for special mention in the Gospel.

Furthermore, Saint Paul in his Letter to the Romans (14.17) reminds us that the Kingdom of God - which we seek to make manifest in this world - is a vision of "...justice, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." Only when we seek to protect the dignity of all in our communities, to restore and reconcile broken relationships, and actively work to eradicate the injustice of the power imbalance at the root of bullying can we find such a vision of the Kingdom.

This is an enormous charge but if we trust that there is "...more grace in the world than sin and that hope is essential in facing all challenges (Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations 3.A)" then we can find - in the Spirit - the wisdom to discern right action, the compassion to act in justice, and the fortitude to persevere in God's work.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Board Level

The board will develop a consistent approach to gathering and reporting information on the perceptions of stakeholders regarding bullying at their site, will regularly gather this information, analyze it, develop or adjust interventions in response to it and report the information to the Ministry of Education upon request and others at the discretion of the Director of Education. Every school has a **safe school team**. The team includes the principal and at least one student, parent, teacher, support staff member and community partner. The promotion of restorative practices in the school and community as a preferred response to conflict is part of the mandate of this team.

1. The board will create a system-level committee to further develop and implement bullying prevention and intervention strategies and programs for use in all schools of the board.
2. A board committee will review and develop professional development resources and programs for use in all schools (i.e., The Umbrella Project) but with a focus on developing a consistent model for all secondary schools.
3. The board will ensure that components of the bullying prevention and intervention program will be addressed as part of professional development.
4. The board will support schools in the implementation of this administrative procedures memorandum.
5. The board will communicate its bullying prevention and intervention policy and strategies to students, parents and school/system staff as well as to the community.
6. The board will provide support for students who have been bullied and for students who have been affected by observing bullying.
7. The board will make available the '[Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form](#)' APC034-01F to all employees and third-party service providers.

School Level

1. School principals will use a restorative justice model as one strategy of intervention where appropriate.
2. School principals will inform students, families and staff of the bullying prevention/intervention policy.
3. School principals will regularly assess the school climate through approved information gathering tools.
4. School principals will implement the bullying awareness and prevention programs developed or recommended for use by a system level committee.
5. School principals will provide a mechanism for the safe reporting of bullying incidents (including those reported anonymously) and will act upon these in a timely manner.
6. All schools must revise their existing school-wide bullying prevention and intervention plans as part of School Improvement Plans. School Plans must include the following: the definition of bullying identified above (see Purpose section), prevention and awareness-raising strategies, intervention and support strategies, including plans to protect victims, reporting requirements, training strategies for members of the school community, communication and outreach strategies, involved in the process where appropriate.
7. School principals will inform all employees that they must report a matter to the principal, as soon as reasonably possible if they become aware that a student at a school of the board may be engaged in an activity for which suspension or expulsion must be considered.
8. School principals will ensure all incidents are reported using the Ministry [Safe Schools Incident Reporting Part I](#) Form APC034-01F by staff and third-party providers and ensure each school report has a specific number. The form is submitted to the Principal or designate.
9. After a report is submitted, the principal must provide a written acknowledgement of the receipt of the report using the [Safe Schools Incident Response – Part II](#) Form APC034-02F to the employee who reported, and identify whether 'Action Taken' or 'No Action Required' (i.e. Possible actions taken can include anything on the progressive discipline continuum e.g. warning, contacting parent, removal of privileges, suspension, expulsion). The principal must consider what actions need to be taken to support the victim(s) also.
10. Principals will ensure that information that could identify the student(s) involved will not be part of the acknowledgement in [Safe Schools Incident Response – Part II](#) Form APC034-02F.
11. Principals will file reporting forms with suspension and/or expulsion letters in Ontario Student Records (OSR) when the 'action is taken' is a formal suspension or expulsion.
12. Principals will retain reporting forms that did not result in a suspension or expulsion in the principal's office for a minimum of three years if 'bullying' is the incident identified and for a minimum of one year for all other incidents.
13. School principals will take measures to address the safety of those reporting bullying incidents.
14. School principals will create a Safe Schools Team to address bullying prevention and intervention as part of its mandate. The Safe Schools Team must be composed of at least one student (where appropriate), one parent, one teacher, one support staff member, one community member/partner, and the principal. The chair of this committee must be a staff member and an existing school committee can assume this role. This committee has a role to play in supporting the use of restorative practices where appropriate.
15. School principals will address the issue of bullying and the reporting of it to school administrators or staff in school newsletters and as part of regular communication with students, families, staff and the community.
16. School principals will record the incidents of bullying and the interventions used as part of the reporting process to the system. They will evaluate their interventions and adjust them based upon this review.
17. School principals will keep parents/guardians of bullying victims aware of the nature of the incident that resulted in harm to the student, the nature of the harm to the student and the steps taken to protect the student's safety, including the nature of any discipline in response to the incident and work with the perpetrator(s). Attempts must be made to include victims, parents and others affected in the process.
18. A principal shall not notify a parent or guardian of a pupil (victim) if in their opinion doing so would put the pupil at risk of harm from a parent or guardian. In these cases, the principal will document the rationale for the decision on [No Parent/Guardian Notification of Victim](#) Form APC034-03F and inform the school superintendent

of the decision. If a teacher reported the incident the principal will inform the teacher of the decision to not notify the parent/guardian, and if appropriate, inform other board employees.

19. School principals will adjust their school's Code of Conduct and the school's response to reported incidents to address the issue of bullying in all its forms.
20. Supports for students who have been bullied, and intervention and support for students who have bullied others must be provided. Schools must also provide students who have witnessed bullying with supportive and responsive strategies. Schools must support students, as well as their parents/guardians with information regarding bullying issues. This information may include information on bullying based on gender, gender identity and expression and on sexual orientation, and must outline what they will do to support these students. Schools will develop specific plans to protect students who have been bullied and must outline a process for parents/guardians to follow if they are not satisfied with the supports that their children receive. Schools must document circumstances when supports are offered and declined by the student or parent/guardians. Intervention for students who demonstrate bullying behaviours 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 promote 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.

For a student with special education needs, interventions, supports, and consequences must be consistent with the student's strengths, needs, goals, and expectations contained in his/her Individual Education Plan (IEP). Mitigating and other factors must be taken into consideration when determining discipline.

Staff

1. All school staff will be vigilant in identifying possible incidents of bullying.
2. All board employees who work directly with students must respond to any student behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate.
3. All board employees must report activities leading to possible suspension and activities leading to suspension pending possible expulsion must be reported to the principal and when reporting, board employees must confirm all reports to the principal in writing using the Ministry [Safe Schools Incident Reporting Part I](#), Form APC034-01F, and ensure each school report has a specific number.
4. When reporting, board employees must consider the safety of others and the urgency of the situation in reporting the incident no later than the end of the school day.
5. Teachers will address the issue of all aspects of bullying as part of their regular classroom orientation process and outline to students what they can do if bullied. They will help students identify and respond appropriately to bullying incidents. Where appropriate, teachers will also incorporate bullying prevention awareness into lesson planning and classroom meetings.
6. All staff will participate in professional development at the school level related to the bullying prevention and intervention initiative.
7. Teachers will incorporate strategies/resources from bullying prevention programs into regular classroom activities. This will include the use of restorative practices where appropriate.

Students

1. Students will conform to the standards of appropriate behaviour outlined in school and system policies related to Safe Schools.
2. Students will report incidents of bullying to their classroom teacher, other school staff or to school administrators.
3. Students will be discouraged from participating in bullying as direct perpetrators or in the role of bystanders. They will be made aware of the consequences of such actions.

4. Students who are victims and/or participants in bullying will actively engage in restorative justice activities where appropriate as part of the school-based solution to incidents, as will perpetrators.
5. With the guidance and support of their teachers and parent/guardians, students shall recognize bullying by being able to:
 - Identify the various forms of bullying.
 - Understand the role of unequal power in bullying.
 - Understand the role of the bystander in both prevention and escalation of bullying.
 - Understand the impact of bullying.
6. Students play a very important role in bullying prevention and intervention and have the responsibility to:
 - Contribute positively to the climate of the school.
 - Respect the safety, property and rights of all members of the school community.
 - Respect the individual needs of others.
 - Give respect and cooperation to all persons in positions of responsibility in the school.
 - Comply with school expectations and regulations with respect to behaviour and take responsibility for their own actions.
 - Not bring anything to school that may compromise the safety of others.
 - Use language that is appropriate in a learning environment.
 - Respect the property of the school building, grounds, equipment and materials.

Parents/Guardians

1. Parents/guardians play an important role in the education of their children and have a responsibility to support the efforts of school staff in maintaining a safe, caring, equitable and inclusive learning environment for all students.
2. Parents/guardians fulfil their role when they:
 - Demonstrate an active interest in their child's school work and progress.
 - Communicate regularly with the school.
 - Support the Board's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Administrative Procedure and school rules.
 - Encourage and assist their child in following the rules of behaviour.
 - Assist school staff in dealing with disciplinary issues involving their child.