

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

SMW.E.5.

Adopted: February 4, 2008
Last Reviewed/Revised: June 20, 2016

Purpose

This policy and regulation outlines the board's commitment to bullying prevention and intervention.

References

- *Safe Schools Code of Conduct Policy SMW.E.4*
- *Policy on Progressive Discipline SMW.E.6*
- *PPM #144*
- *Education Act*
- *Ontario Regulation 472/07*
- *Policy GSA.F.4*

Forms

Appendices

Policy Statement

The Wellington Catholic District School Board is committed to providing the highest degree of service to all students entrusted to its care. The Board recognizes that the diverse emotional and behavioural needs of some students may require unique discipline, accommodation and or modification. A healthy, safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment where all students feel safe, included, and accepted is a necessary condition for student success and well-being. The WCDSB is committed to bullying prevention and appropriate intervention in order to promote a safe and caring school community.

This policy will work in concert with the *Safe Schools Code of Conduct Policy SMW.E.4* and the *Policy on Progressive Discipline SMW.E.6* to ensure a positive Catholic learning environment for all students.

Policy Regulation

1. Regulation

The Wellington Catholic District School Board (hereto referred to as the WCDSB) including staff, students, parents, and trustees is committed to the mission of providing a safe and welcoming learning environment that supports academic excellence and is an example of Christian Community. All parties share in the responsibility for creating a positive environment that is safe, harmonious, comfortable, inclusive and respectful.

The WCDSB recognizes that:

- Bullying adversely affects a student's ability to learn.
- Bullying adversely affects the school climate, including healthy relationships.
- 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. Definition

Bullying in *PPM #144* as released by the M.O.E. on December 5, 2012 and set out in subsection 1(1) of the *Education Act* defines bullying as follows:

“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

(1.0.01) For the purposes of the definition of “bullying” in subsection (1) behavior includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

Cyber-bullying

(1.0.02) 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.

3. Background Information

- Students may maintain power over others in the school based on size, strength, age, intelligence, economic status, social status, solidarity of peer group, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender and race.
- 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.
- Bullying 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 messages, Internet websites, social networking, or other technology).

- Cyberbullying via communication technology, like other forms of bullying is about power and control.
- Bullying prevention is a whole school approach that heightens awareness for a safe, caring and inclusive school climate. It includes shared understandings about the nature and causes of bullying as well as the effects on victims of bullying.

4. Bullying Intervention

- Schools need a responsive and effective response plan. It needs to provide support for students who have been bullied and include response strategies for students who have witnessed incidents of bullying, and students who have engaged in bullying.
- Intervention to stop bullying is a community responsibility at all levels.
- Supports may be provided by school-based employees of the board, through board programs and resource personnel, or through community-based service providers, including social service agencies and mental health agencies. A range of supports should be available – from early prevention to more intensive interventions in cases of persistent bullying, with possible referral to community-based service providers.
- For a student with special needs, interventions, supports and consequences will be consistent with the student's strengths and needs, as well as with the program goals and learning expectations documented in his or her Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- Employees of the Board will take seriously all allegations of bullying behaviour and act in a timely sensitive, and supportive manner when responding to students who disclose or report bullying incidents. Board employees who work directly with students –

including administrators, teachers and other school staff – will respond to any student behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate. Such behaviour includes all inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour at any time at school and at any school-related event if, in the employee’s opinion, it is safe to respond to it, in accordance with subsection 300.4 of Part XIII of the *Education Act* and *Ontario Regulation 472/07*. Such inappropriate behaviour may include bullying.

- The focus needs to be on a positive school climate. The school climate 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.

5. 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.

Section 300.3 of the Act also specifies that principals are required to notify the parents of 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 will 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.

6. Guiding Principles

- The Board recognizes that bullying adversely affects the school climate and a student's ability to learn, to maintain healthy relationships and to achieve and flourish academically.
- 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.
- The Board will reinforce bullying prevention messages through programs addressing bias, stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination based on age, race, sexual orientation, gender, faith, disability or ethnicity.

- The Board will continue to support prevention strategies including character development through resources and professional development.
- The Board will conduct anonymous school climate surveys of students, staff, and parents at least once every two years.

Schools will:

- Focus on prevention and early intervention.
- Have in place a safe and accepting schools team.
- Foster a safe, inclusive, and accepting school climate by developing prevention measures and initiatives that include the whole school.
- Accommodations and safety plans must be developed for students with special needs.
- Ensure appropriate use of Personal Electronic Devices as per Board *policy GSA.F.4*.
- Avail all students of the opportunity to participate in prevention and training initiatives.
- Include teaching strategies that focus on healthy relationships.
- Ensure that interventions in specific instances of bullying will be consistent with progressive discipline that utilizes a continuum of supports and consequences as per Board policy *SMW.E.6*.
- Develop procedures that allow the reporting of bullying to be done in a safe manner that minimizes the possibility of reprisals.
- Ensure effective communication with parents of students who have been harmed as the result of a serious student incident and parents of students who have engaged in serious student incidents.

6. Review

Schools in cooperation with the Board will establish a monitoring and review process to determine the effectiveness of the Bullying Prevention

and Intervention Policies and Regulations. In conducting such reviews, input will be sought from all key partners in the immediate and broader school community.