



## YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

BOARD POLICY	
<i>Policy Section</i> <b>Students</b>	<i>Policy Number</i> <b>223</b>
<i>Former Policy #</i>	<i>Page</i> <b>1 of 12</b>
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**POLICY TITLE:     BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

**SECTION A**

**1.    PURPOSE**

The York Catholic District School Board values learning environments that are safe, nurturing, trusting, positive and respectful - consistent with our Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church. Jesus is our model for all respectful and loving behaviour. All forms of bullying (physical, emotional, verbal, electronic, etc.) are insidious forms of violence. All students and members of our school communities have the right to a school environment free from bullying, harassment, threats and violence.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- 1.1. Denounce bullying in any form on board property, on buses, or in any other circumstance that affects the school climate (e.g. online, in the community);
- 1.2. Reinforce the Board's commitment to support programs for bullying prevention and intervention; and,
- 1.3. Provide procedures to address incidents of bullying

**2.    POLICY STATEMENT**

It is the policy of the York Catholic District School Board that bullying in any form is unacceptable and that staff shall implement bullying prevention and intervention strategies which foster a positive learning and teaching environment for all students and staff.

**3.    PARAMETERS**

- 3.1 The York Catholic District School Board and its schools will actively promote a positive school climate reflecting, but not exclusive of, the following characteristics:
  - 3.1.1 Students and staff feel safe and are safe;
  - 3.1.2 Healthy and inclusive relationships are promoted;

- 3.1.3 All partners are engaged;
- 3.1.4 Bullying prevention messages are reinforced through programs addressing discrimination 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;
- 3.1.5 Students are encouraged to be positive leaders in their school community;
- 3.1.6 Maximizing learning potential is emphasized;
- 3.1.7 Cultural sensitivity training, recognition of diversity, and responding to the needs of different learners are incorporated; and,
- 3.1.8 The YCDSB *Respecting Difference* document is an integral guide for addressing all forms of bullying.

#### **4. RESPONSIBILITIES**

##### **4.1 Director of Education**

- 4.1.1 To oversee compliance with the Bullying Prevention and Intervention policy.

##### **4.2 Senior Administration**

- 4.2.1 To support the implementation and compliance with policies and related guidelines and procedures.
- 4.2.2 To provide training/in-service sessions on bullying prevention and intervention for all administrators, teachers and support staff.
- 4.2.3 To conduct surveys of pupils, parents and staff once every two years.
- 4.2.4 To promote awareness and understanding of bullying and its consequences by conducting Bullying Prevention Week during the week beginning the third Sunday of November each year.
- 4.2.5 To provide intervention strategies and other supports for students who have been bullied, been bystanders of bullying, or have engaged in bullying.

##### **4.3 Principals**

- 4.3.1 To demonstrate leadership in implementing and sustaining an anti-bullying culture in the school.
- 4.3.2 To establish a Safe School Action Team to develop and implement a school-wide approach to bullying prevention and intervention.
- 4.3.3 To develop a school-level Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and review it annually; (see Appendix A for template).
- 4.3.4 To model and reinforce appropriate interaction at all times.
- 4.3.5 To respond immediately in cases where actual or perceived bullying has occurred, including incidents reported through [Report It](#), and provide appropriate interventions for the student(s) who has experienced bullying as well as the student(s) who caused the bullying, including notifying parents/guardians of both parties.
- 4.3.6 To follow the *York Regional Police and School Boards Protocol* in involving police in bullying situations.
- 4.3.7 To notify Superintendent in various serious cases where suspension or police involvement may be warranted.

#### **4.4 School Staff**

- 4.4.1 To encourage students to report incidents of bullying.
- 4.4.2 To address and report all inappropriate incidents to ensure the safety of students.
- 4.4.3 To use resources that will assist in developing age-appropriate conflict resolution skills, social skills and positive relationships.
- 4.4.4 To model and reinforce appropriate interaction.
- 4.4.5 To teach character virtues and the characteristics of positive, healthy relationships at appropriate teachable moments.
- 4.4.6 To support students in their efforts to make good decisions and to develop a positive school climate, especially in response to bullying incidents.

#### **4.5 Students**

- 4.5.1 To follow the standards of appropriate behaviour outlined in Board policies and the school Code of Conduct.
- 4.5.2 To report incidents of bullying to the classroom teacher, other school staff, or to school administrators.
- 4.5.3 To avoid participating in bullying either in the role of direct perpetrators or in the role of a bystander.
- 4.5.4 To accept consequences for engaging in bullying activities, either as a perpetrator or bystander.

#### **4.6 Safe School Action Team**

- 4.6.1 To support the Principal in developing and maintaining a school plan to address and eliminate bullying issues.

#### **4.7 Parents, Visitors, Community Members**

- 4.7.1 To promote a safe, caring and positive environment for all by developing an awareness of bullying issues.
- 4.7.2 To inform the school if bullying is suspected.
- 4.7.3 To encourage students to report any incidents of bullying to school staff or administration and reinforce the need to speak out.
- 4.7.4 To support the school through the Catholic School Council in promoting local school bullying prevention and intervention initiatives.
- 4.7.5 To model and reinforce acceptable behaviours.
- 4.7.6 To take advantage of opportunities for education and information about Bullying Prevention issues or initiatives.

## **5. DEFINITIONS**

### **5.1 Bullying**

Bullying is a dynamic of unhealthy interaction that can take many forms. It can be physical (e.g. hitting, pushing, tripping), verbal (e.g. name calling, mocking, or making sexist, racist, or homophobic comments), or social (e.g. excluding others from a group, spreading gossip, or rumours). It may also occur through technology (e.g. spreading rumours, images, or hurtful comments through the use of e-mail, cell phones, text messaging, Internet website, or other technology).

Bullying consists of aggressive and typically repeated behavior that has 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;
- ii. Creating a negative environment at school for another individual, and 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 those listed above in 3(d). [*Education Act 1(1)*, and Bill 13, The Accepting Schools Act, 2012].

## 5.2 Cyber-bullying

The use of information and communication technologies, such as e-mail, cell phones and pager text messages, instant messaging, personal websites and on-line personal polling websites, to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group, that is intended to harm or threaten others, or where the individual should know that it could harm or threaten others.

“Bullying” by electronic means [includes],

- i. Creating 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;
- iii. Communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals; [Education Act 1(1), and Bill 13, The Accepting Schools Act, 2012]
- iv. Sending messages to or about another person that are hurtful or threatening through any means of social media (texting, e-mail, twitter, Facebook, etc.).

## 5.3 Power

Students attaining or maintaining control over others in the school through real or perceived differences. Some areas of difference may be, *but are not limited to*, size, strength, age, intelligence, economic status, social status, solidarity of peer group, religion, ethnicity, disability, need for special education, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender or race.

## 6 . CROSS REFERENCES

YCDSB Policy 202 [Safe Schools - Student Discipline](#)

YCDSB Policy 218 [Code of Conduct](#)

YCDSB Religion & Family Life Programs

[YCDSB Independent Procedures: Administrative Guidelines for Student Groups in Catholic Schools](#)

YCDSB Valuing Diversity – A Framework for Equity in the Classroom Document

[Bill 13, Accepting Schools Act](#)

CAYRE Curriculum Resources

[Education Act](#)

[Ministry of Education](#)  
Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 144:  
[Bullying Prevention and Intervention](#)

[Report it](#)  
[Respecting Difference](#), OCSTA & AEBO

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# **POLICY TITLE: BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

## **SECTION B: GUIDELINES**

### **1. PREVENTION STRATEGIES**

Bullying prevention is a whole school approach that heightens expectations for a safe, caring and inclusive school climate. It fosters a supportive environment that upholds our Gospel Values and encourages positive relationships between students, staff and parents.

“These initiatives are but one dimension of the whole effort to provide a safe and accepting learning environment which enhances the many existing ways in which Catholic schools provide pastoral care for students according to the principles of the Gospel. Paramount to the success of this process is the adequate training of all school personnel, teachers in particular, regarding all aspects of this effort to eliminate bullying.” (Respecting Difference, p. 2)

All students in York Catholic District Schools will participate in bullying prevention training and initiatives within their own school. These include, but are not limited to:

- 1.1 Ongoing classroom teaching with curriculum links
- 1.2 Religious Education Curriculum links
- 1.3 Character Education initiatives
- 1.4 Student leadership programs and/or initiatives
- 1.5 Student success strategies
- 1.6 Healthy lifestyles and relationships initiatives
- 1.7 Social skills development
- 1.8 Mentorship programs
- 1.9 Conflict resolution strategies and/or programs
- 1.10 Restorative practice strategies and/or programs
- 1.11 Peer mediation strategies and/or programs
- 1.12 Tribes strategies and/or program

### **2. INTERVENTION STRATEGIES**

The goal of intervention measures is to stop incidences of bullying and to foster a positive learning and teaching environment that is rooted in our mission statement. All 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 promote positive behaviour. Intervention strategies range from simple responses to more intensive actions, such as suspension, in cases of persistent bullying. Early (simple) interventions may include, but are not limited to the following:

- 2.1 Contact with Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
- 2.2 Review of expectations – verbal reminder
- 2.3 A written work assignment with a learning component
- 2.4 Referral to counselling

- 2.5 Consultation with Youth Education Officers and School Resource Officers if applicable
- 2.6 Withdrawal of privileges
- 2.7 Restorative practices
- 2.8 School, board and community support programs
- 2.9 Safe schools team consultations
- 2.10 Others that support the premise of early intervention

### **3. SUSPENSION**

In recognition of the seriousness of bullying, it is included on the list of infractions for which suspension may be considered, as well as expulsion in extreme circumstances

### **4. SCHOOL LEVEL PLANS**

Schools are required to develop and implement a school-wide Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan as part of the School Improvement Plan, (refer to Appendix A). Components of these plans must be consistent with the policies and procedures of the York Catholic District School Board and the Respecting Difference document, and must include:

- 4.1 Definitions of bullying
- 4.2 Analysis of the school climate survey (completed every two (2) years)
- 4.3 Prevention strategies
- 4.4 Intervention strategies
- 4.5 Procedures to allow students to report bullying incidents safely
- 4.6 Training strategies for all members of the school community
- 4.7 Communication/outreach strategies
- 4.8 Monitoring/review process

### **5. SAFE SCHOOLS ACTION TEAM**

Each school must have a Safe School Team, chaired by a staff member, composed of at least one student (where appropriate), one parent, one teacher, one support member, one community partner and the Principal. An existing school committee can assume this role.

## BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN – SCHOOL IMPLEMENTATION TEMPLATE

*Adapted from Ministry of Education, “Working Draft: Safe and Accepting Schools Model Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan” January 2013, Queen’s Printer for Ontario, 2013, available online  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/BullyingPreventPlan.pdf>*

**York Catholic District School Board**

[School Name and Logo]

### Board Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan School Implementation Template

*The Education Act requires school boards to develop a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and requires all schools to implement the plan.*

This document is intended to facilitate the School’s implementation of the Board’s Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, with a view to promote a school-wide approach to ensuring a safe, inclusive and accepting school environment free of bullying, harassment, discrimination, and other inappropriate behaviours.

The Board’s Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is based upon the Ministry of Education’s Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (the “Model Plan”)<sup>1</sup> released January 29, 2013, and the requirements set out in this document have been taken directly from the Model Plan.

#### EDUCATION, AWARENESS AND OUTREACH

[insert school name] (the “School”) recognizes that a whole-school approach to engaging the school community will help the School’s efforts to address inappropriate behaviour.

To this end, the School will utilise the following Ministry of Education definition of bullying in communications with the school community:

**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 (“intimidation”)

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

### **Cyber-bullying**

For the purposes of the definition of “bullying” above, cyber-bullying includes bullying using digital technologies including mobile phones, email and social media tools.

Cyber-bullying 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 communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.
- c) Pranking (Repeated hang ups, anonymous, mocking or threatening phone calls.)
- d) Image sharing (Forwarding or sharing unflattering or private images without permission.)
- e) Sexually explicit images (People of any age, who forward or share images of a sexual nature of a person under 18 need to be aware that this is a criminal offence (child pornography) that may result in prosecution.)
- f) Posting or sending insulting, threatening or discriminatory messages via electronic communications or social media (e.g., emails/texts/twitter/Facebook/snapchat)
- g) Personal online information (Publishing online someone’s private, personal or embarrassing information without permission, or spreading rumours online.)
- h) Identity theft (Assuming someone’s identity online and negatively representing them in a way that damages their reputation or relationships.)
- i) Hate sites (Creating hate sites or implementing social exclusion campaigns on social networking sites.)

In its communication efforts, the School will:

- Identify different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying
- Explain the myths and realities of bullying behaviour
- Identify bullying and differentiate bullying from conflict, aggression and teasing
- Define power and peer dynamics
- Identify how biases, prejudice and hate can lead to bullying
- Identify different manifestations and underlying factors of bullying, such as body image, racism, sexism, homophobia, disability, etc
- Communicate a whole school approach and the essential importance of a positive school climate for student achievement and well-being
- Work to develop an awareness and understanding of the factors that contribute to a safe, inclusive, caring and accepting school climate
- Identify ways to make students aware of how they can help prevent and address bullying
- Identify strategies to engage parents in conversations about bullying prevention and how to promote a positive school climate

- Reach out to parents and the broader school community
- Reflect on relationships and interactions and focus on promoting healthy relationships using a variety of strategies
- Investigate community partners and resources available in the community

The School will also communicate and share with the school community, “policies and procedures including the Board/school Code of Conduct, equity and inclusive education policy and guidelines for religious accommodations, procedures to address incidents of discrimination, progressive discipline approach, and bullying prevention and intervention plans and strategies

The School will endeavour to increase education, awareness and outreach by using continuing best practices.

The School will identify and implement strategies to engage parents in conversations about bullying prevention and how to promote a positive school climate.

## **EVALUATION OF EVIDENCE**

The School recognizes that effective anti-bullying strategies must be evidence-based.

The School will base its bullying interventions, strategies, practices and programs on evidence from the school climate surveys and other relevant information. The school will take the following steps to assess anti-bullying initiatives and strategies:

- Evaluate the evidence to determine the main areas of concern, and identify issues in the physical environment, determine current procedures, and assess the strategies in place based on results of the school climate surveys and other relevant information.
- Identify children and youth involved in bullying (including the bully, the person being bullied, and those who may have witnessed or been affected by the bullying). The School will consider using a risk assessment approach in this process.
- Review and update the School’s strategies as a result of gathering new information and share with the school community.

### **Pre-Evaluation Strategy**

The School’s main issues of concern raised by students, staff and parents in the school climate surveys and based on other relevant information have been identified and reviewed by the School for appropriate follow-up.

The School’s concerns raised in respect of the physical environment have been identified and reviewed by the School for appropriate follow-up.

The School’s current processes for reporting, responding, supporting and following up on issues have been reviewed and revised as appropriate.

Based on a review of the school climate survey results and other relevant information, areas of success and/or improvement have been identified and utilized to update School practices.

Based on the school climate surveys and other relevant information, areas requiring improvement have been identified and utilized to update School practices.

Based on the above, the School has implemented an appropriate action plan to address areas of concern.

### **Post-Evaluation Strategy**

The School will reassess the results of subsequent school climate surveys to verify the efficacy of the anti-bullying initiatives implemented. The “post-evaluation phase gathers evidence to test the efficacy of the prevention, responses, interventions or supports provided in order for changes to be made, where necessary.”

Upon re-evaluation, the School will update the information in the action plan to reflect the effectiveness of its anti-bullying initiatives.

### **POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

The School recognizes that a whole school approach and a strong policy and legislative framework are important for bringing widespread change.

The School also recognizes that the goals of policy initiatives must address the areas of challenge identified in school climate surveys and other relevant data.

The School will actively communicate its policies, procedures and guidelines to the school community (including involving the school community in the review and/or development of policies, procedures and guidelines relating to bullying, discrimination and harassment).

The roles/responsibilities of the school community (students, staff, parents, and community members) will be continually reviewed in order to implement best practices.

### **PREVENTION**

The School recognizes that fostering a positive learning environment will help to reduce possible bullying, harassment, and discrimination incidents. The School is committed to taking steps to strengthen prevention measures.

The roles and responsibilities of the safe and accepting school team (which will be communicated with the school community) are being implemented and revised as appropriate.

Based on its evidence-based analysis, the School has identified and implemented as appropriate the following practices and initiatives for bullying prevention (as divided by categories set out in the Model Plan):

- a. bullying prevention and intervention programs or activities that are evidence-informed and that address the needs identified by the Board or the School;
- b. relationship building and community building programs that are present in the school, classroom and in the larger community;

- c. activities that promote a positive school climate;
- d. awareness raising strategies for students, e.g. social emotional learning, empathy, developing self-regulation skills;
- e. awareness raising strategies to engage community partners and parents in early and ongoing dialogue;
- f. ways to link curriculum and daily learning;
- g. ways to support and encourage role modeling by caring adults and student leaders within the School and school community.;

The School has also identified and implemented as appropriate the learning and training opportunities for school staff and the school community that are needed.

The School will also:

- provide opportunities for regular check-ins with students at risk or affected by bullying;
- provide opportunities for teachers to development effective classroom management strategies using progressive discipline;
- establish and maintain respectful and caring classrooms; and,
- align supervision plan to address where and when bullying happens, as identified through climate surveys.

## **INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES**

The School recognizes the importance of using timely interventions and supports with a school-wide approach.

To this end, the School will:

- use teachable moments within a progressive discipline approach to address inappropriate behaviour, and consider mitigating and other factors;
- have in place processes and strategies to identify and respond to bullying when it happens;
- identify strategies for supporting all students involved in bullying;
- communicate the progressive discipline approach to the school community and the procedures in place to support the student.

The School supports the use of evidence-informed interventions and support strategies in a timely manner and using a whole school approach.