



Administrative Procedure: Bullying Prevention & Intervention

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1.0 Definitions

- 1.1 **BULLYING** means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a pupil where,
- 1.1.1 the behaviour is intended by the student to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behaviour would be likely to have the effect of:
- a. 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
 - b. creating a negative environment at a school for another individual,
and
- 1.1.2 the behavior occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the person 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;
- 1.1.3 Bullying – For the purposes of the definition of “bullying” in subsection (1) of the Education Act, behavior includes propagating through the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.
- 1.2 **CYBER-BULLYING** includes bullying by electronic means (commonly known as cyber-bullying), including:
- 1.2.1 Creating a web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
 - 1.2.2 impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet and/or social media and/or social media; and
 - 1.2.3 communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website or social media that may be accessed by one or more individuals.

2.0 Understanding bullying and cyber-bullying

- 2.1 **Bullying is behaviour that can be repeated or occur one time** and can be carried

out by an individual or group of individuals.

- 2.2 Bullying can occur in situations where there are real or perceived power imbalances between individuals or groups, and may be a symptom of racism, classism, homophobia, sexism, religious discrimination, ethnic discrimination or other forms of bias and/or discrimination. Bullying can also be based on, but not limited to, body size, appearance, abilities, or other real or perceived factors. Perceptions about differences are often based on stereotypes perpetuated in broader society.
- 2.3 Bullying, including cyber-bullying, may be intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect. It can take many forms including physical (for example, pushing, tripping), verbal (for example, name calling, insults, threats, sexist/racist/transphobic comments), social, also known as relational (for example, spreading rumours, intentionally excluding others, humiliating others with public gestures) and causing harm to one's property.
- 2.4 Taking action against bullying behaviour requires school staff to consider the root cause(s) and identify the most effective interventions.
- 2.5 Bullying has the potential to:
 - 2.5.1 negatively affect students' learning, attendance, safety/sense of safety, sense of self-worth and/or overall mental health and well-being.
 - 2.5.2 create a negative environment at school or school-related activities for an individual, group or the whole school.
- 2.6 Proactive intervention coupled with coaching and support can help all students develop the skills and understanding needed to build and maintain positive relationships.
- 2.7 Bullying impedes the development of a positive school climate. A whole-school approach involving all education and community members is required to prevent bullying.
- 2.8 **Cyber-bullying** is the act of engaging in bullying behaviors through electronic means such as social media platforms, email, text or direct messaging, digital gaming and/or communication applications.

- 2.9 Examples of cyber-bullying may include:
- 2.9.1 sending or sharing hateful, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating electronic communication or images via text messages, emails, direct messages.
 - 2.9.2 revealing information considered to be personal, private, and sensitive without consent.
 - 2.9.3 making and/or engaging, and/or participating in fake accounts on social networking sites to impersonate, humiliate and/or exclude others.
 - 2.9.4 excluding or disrupting access to, a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts and during digital gaming sessions.
- 2.10 Increasing the use of digital platforms enhances the threat of cyber-bullying as well as other safety risks.
- 2.11 Bullying, including cyber-bullying, may intersect with other forms of sexual exploitation including, but not limited to, sextortion and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. Traffickers and other sexual predators are increasingly using fake accounts to pose as acquaintances or friends of children and youth to lure, groom and recruit them into engaging in sexual acts or services. Children and youth who experience bullying are at increased risk for being sex trafficked.
- 2.12 Increasing the use of digital platforms enhances the threat of cyber-bullying as well as other safety risks.
- 2.13 Bullying, including cyber-bullying, may intersect with other forms of sexual exploitation including, but not limited to, sextortion and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. Traffickers and other sexual predators are increasingly using fake accounts to pose as acquaintances or friends of children and youth to lure, groom and recruit them into engaging in sexual acts or services. Children and youth who experience bullying are at increased risk for being sex trafficked ([P-ES 327 Keeping Students Safe: Anti-Sex Trafficking](#) and [AP-ES 327 Keeping Students Safe: Anti-Sex Trafficking](#)).

3.0 Guidelines

- 3.1 Positive school climate is the sum total of all the personal relationships within a school. When these relationships are founded in mutual acceptance and inclusion, and modeled by all, a culture of respect becomes the norm. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable and accepted. To help achieve a positive school climate, the Superior North Catholic DSB and its schools, will actively promote and support positive behaviours that reflect the Catholic Gospel Values.
- 3.2 Each school will have a Safe Schools Team which is a school-based team responsible for fostering a safe, inclusive, and accepting school climate that 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. This could be a sub-committee of an existing school committee that can assume this role. The chair of this team must be a staff member.

4.0 School-Based Prevention and Awareness Strategies

- 4.1 A positive climate is developed when principals and staff:
 - 4.1.1 Promote the development of healthy and inclusive relationships among the staff and student body and with parents and the broader community.
 - 4.1.2 Provide and support training for students, staff members and parents, that raises awareness of the problem of bullying.
 - 4.1.3 Know and follow administrative procedures related to safe, caring and respectful schools.
 - 4.1.4 Reinforce bullying prevention messages through programs addressing discrimination based on such factors as age, race, sexual orientation, gender, faith, disability, ethnicity and socio-economic disadvantage.
 - 4.1.5 Post, communicate and enforce clear codes of student conduct.
 - 4.1.6 Assess the awareness and scope of the bullying problem at the school through school climate surveys.
 - 4.1.7 Ensure that students are supervised in all areas of the school and on the school grounds, with particular attention being given to any areas where

bullying has been identified as a problem in a particular school setting.

- 4.1.8 Find a variety of ways to reward students for positive, inclusive behaviour and to support them in being positive leaders in their school community.
- 4.1.9 Encourage parents to participate and become engaged in the life of the school and to volunteer to assist in school activities and projects.
- 4.1.10 Provide ongoing communication with parents, ie. newsletters, about anti-bullying initiatives and resources.
- 4.1.11 Involve school councils in the development of anti-bullying initiatives and the ongoing implementation of prevention programs.
- 4.1.12 Work together with parents and guardians to teach children to be assertive and to develop age appropriate independence. This independence can contribute to self-confidence and may deter bullies who often seek out acquiescent victims.
- 4.1.13 Reinforce regularly the message that bullying will not be tolerated and that everyone must work together to create a positive learning environment.
- 4.1.14 Establish procedures for investigating bullying behaviours and use progressive discipline to develop consequences in their own school Code of Conduct.
- 4.1.15 Include an anti-bullying statement in their local Code of Conduct.
- 4.1.16 Have in place, a Safe Schools Team as outlined above in 3.2.

5.0 Classroom Prevention Strategies

- 5.1 All staff provide opportunities for students to talk about bullying and to define unacceptable behaviours. Teachers involve students in establishing classroom rules against bullying and peer harassment. Students are engaged in classroom activities and discussions related to bullying and violence, including awareness of the harm that they cause and strategies to reduce them.
- 5.2 All staff provide and regularly reinforce clear expectations for appropriate student behaviour.
- 5.3 Teachers provide integrated programs that support bullying prevention strategies. All staff focus on developing healthy relationships in classroom

lessons and include books that deal with related issues in student reading materials.

- 5.4 Teachers promote cooperation by assigning projects that require collaboration, when appropriate. Such cooperation teaches students how to compromise and how to assert without demanding. Teachers vary the grouping of participants in these projects and monitor the treatment of participants in each group.
- 5.5 Teachers must ensure that students with special education needs have interventions, supports and consequences that are consistent with the child's strengths and needs, as well as with the program goals and learning expectations documented in their Individual Education Plan (IEP). Ongoing intervention and support may be necessary to promote and sustain positive student behaviour.
- 5.6 All staff ensure that students know what to do when they experience or observe a bullying confrontation. Knowing the process to follow gives the students confidence and a feeling of security.

6.0 Intervention Strategies

6.1 School-Wide Intervention Strategies:

- 6.1.1 All staff, including administrators, encourage students to make confidential reports if they are the victims of bullying or are aware of another victim or victims. Reporting methods are designed to minimize the possibility of reprisal. Details of incidents are carefully recorded and tracked. Such reports are investigated and resolved expeditiously, consistent with administrative procedures.
- 6.1.2 Programs, interventions, and other support should be made available for students who have been bullied, witnessed incidents of bullying or have engaged in bullying. They may be provided by social workers, psychologists, community members (such as elders) or other professionals who have training in similar fields, as determined by the board.
- 6.1.3 Parents who report bullying are given a receptive hearing, followed by investigation and resolution of the allegations. Principals must follow up with the parents who reported the bullying.
- 6.1.4 Interventions are conducted in ways that are consistent with a progressive

discipline approach. The strategies will range from early and ongoing interventions, to more intensive interventions in cases of persistent bullying, with possible referral to community or social service agencies. A variety of early interventions, ongoing interventions, supports and consequences are described in the [AP-ES 314 Student Discipline](#).

7.0 Classroom Intervention Strategies

- 7.1 All staff must take immediate action when bullying is observed and let students know that they care and will not allow anyone to be mistreated. By taking immediate action in dealing with the behaviour of a bully, educators support both the victim and the witness or witnesses.
- 7.2 Dealing with the behavior of a bully does not necessarily mean confronting the bully in front of his or her peers. Staff will use their professional judgement to meet with the bully in a confidential manner with regard for the safety of all. Challenging a bully in front of his or her peers may actually enhance the bully's behavior and lead to further aggression.
- 7.3 Principals , as appropriate according to the Safe Schools Act, will notify the parents of both victims and bullies, when a confrontation occurs and seek to resolve the problem quickly at school. They refer both victims and aggressors to counselling whenever appropriate.
- 7.4 School staff provide support for bullying victims whenever necessary, including creating a buddy system whereby students have a particular friend or older buddy on whom they can depend.
- 7.5 School staff listen receptively to parents who report bullying. When appropriate, the incident will be reported to the principal who will provide direction on the next steps, as soon as possible.
- 7.6 Staff should avoid attempts to mediate a threatening bullying situation alone if they are uncomfortable. They will inform the principal who will address the situation as appropriate, including contacting police services.

8.0 Reporting requirements and Investigation

- 8.1 Serious student incidents must be reported to the principal so that appropriate actions to address the incident and protect the student may be taken. If the incident could lead to suspension or expulsion then the Safe School Reporting

Form 1 must be used to report to the Principal. Bullying, including cyber-bullying, is an instance of a serious student incident. Please consult Administrative Procedure - Equity & Safety 314 for reporting requirements and investigation procedures [AP-ES 314 Student Discipline](#)

9.0 Suspensions and Expulsions for bullying:

- 9.1 Boards should ensure alignment of policies related to suspensions and expulsions with [Ontario Regulation 440/20: Suspension of Elementary School Pupils](#).
- 9.2 A [regulation](#) came into effect in 2020 to eliminate discretionary suspensions for students in **junior kindergarten to grade 3**. Incidents of bullying involving students from junior kindergarten to grade 3 should be addressed with the appropriate positive behaviour supports in the school setting.
- 9.3 Principals must suspend students in junior kindergarten to grade 3 for incidents of bullying if:
 - 9.3.1 their continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person
 - 9.3.2 the bullying 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 (for example, socio- economic status, appearance).
- 9.4 The principal may only suspend a student in junior kindergarten to grade 3 under section 310 of the [Education Act](#) for engaging in bullying if they have conducted an investigation respecting the allegations.
- 9.5 Under the [Education Act](#), principals **must suspend a student between grades 4 to 12 for bullying** and, after an investigation, consider referring that student for expulsion if:
 - 9.5.1 the student has previously been suspended for bullying; and the student's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person.
 - 9.5.2 the bullying 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.

10.0 Communication Procedure

- 10.1 The school principal shall review this policy at the beginning of each school year, with all staff members, including lunch hour supervisors.
- 10.2 The school principal shall review this policy at the beginning of the school year, with parents and school councils.
- 10.3 Board policy mandates that this procedure will be reviewed every three years.

11.0 School Level Plans

- 11.1 Schools are required to develop and implement school-wide bullying prevention and intervention plans as part of the role of the Safe Schools Team. This plan must be consistent with the policies and procedures of the Board and must include:
 - 11.1.1 The definition of bullying.
 - 11.1.2 Analysis of the school climate survey (completed every two (2) years).
 - 11.1.3 Prevention strategies.
 - 11.1.4 Intervention strategies.
 - 11.1.5 Procedures to allow students to report bullying incidents safely.
 - 11.1.6 Training strategies for members of the school community.
 - 11.1.7 Communication and outreach strategies.
 - 11.1.8 Monitoring and review processes.
- 11.2 A yearly plan for using materials received from the Board to support Bullying Awareness and Prevention week will be developed (s300.0.2(1) of the *Education Act*).

12.0 Implementation Strategies

- 12.1 **Professional development/Training** The Board will put in place professional development/training on bullying prevention and strategies for promoting a positive school climate for all principals and staff (including staff in social work, child and youth work, psychology, and related areas, and educational assistants). The professional development/training will include curriculum linked culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy training strategies on bullying prevention and intervention as well as ways of responding to gender-based and homophobic bullying that are consistent with equity training on cultural sensitivity, on respect for diversity, and on special education needs. This will provide principals, teachers, and other school staff the resources and support they need to disrupt and dismantle systemic barriers and to address all forms of bullying.
- 12.2 **Communications and Outreach strategies.** The Board will communicate their policies and guidelines on bullying prevention and intervention to administrators, teachers, and other school staff, students, parents, their Special Education Advisory Committee, their Indigenous Education Council, school councils, and school bus operators and drivers. The Board will provide this information to the Catholic Parent Involvement Committee, and other appropriate community partners.

13.0 Monitoring & Review

- 13.1 The Board will monitor and review the prevention and intervention strategies to determine their effectiveness. This process will include a regular cycle of analysis of the school climate through anonymous surveys and collection and analysis of data on the nature of violent incidents. This analysis will support the development of board policies and inform board and school improvement.

Appendix A - How to Handle Harassment in the Hallways in three Minutes

STOP the harassment.

- Interrupt the comment/halt the physical harassment.
- DO NOT pull students aside for confidentiality unless absolutely necessary.
- Make sure all the students in the area hear your comments.

- It is important that all students, whether onlookers, potential targets, or potential harassers, get the message that students are safe and protected in this school.

IDENTIFY the harassment.

- Label the form of harassment: “You just put someone down based upon perceived race, religion, ethnicity, abilities, gender, age, sexual orientation, economic status, size, etc..”
- DO NOT imply that the victim is a member of that identifiable group.
- A major goal is to take the “spotlight” off the target and turn the focus to the behavior. Students should realize what was said, regardless of what was meant (i.e. kidding).

BROADEN the response.

- DO NOT personalize your response at this stage: “At this school we do not harass people.” “Our community does not appreciate hateful/thoughtless behavior.”
- Re-identify the offensive behavior: “This name calling can also be hurtful to others who overhear it.”
- “We don’t do put-downs at this school” specifically includes those listening, as well as the school community in general. Even if they were “only kidding”, harassers must realize the possible ramifications of their actions.

ASK for change in future behavior.

- Personalize the response: “Chris, please pause and think before you act.”
- Quietly check in with the victim at this time. “If this continues, please tell me, and I will take further action. We want everyone to be safe at this school.”