



Huron-Superior Catholic

DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is behaviour that can be repeated or occur one time and can be carried out by an individual or a group of individuals, where:

- The behaviour can occur in situations where there are real or perceived power imbalance between individuals or groups and may be a symptom of racism, classism, homophobia, sexism, religious discrimination, ethnic discrimination or other forms of bias and discrimination. Bully can also be based on factors such as body size, appearance, abilities or other real or perceived factors. Perceptions about differences are based on stereotypes perpetuated in broader society.
- The behaviour, including cyber-bullying, may be intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect. It may take many forms including physical, verbal, social (also known as relational and causing harm to one's property).

Taking action against bullying behaviour requires school staff to consider the root causes(s) and identify the most effective interventions.

Bully has the potential to:

- Negatively affect students' learning, attendance, safety/sense of safety, sense of self-worth and overall mental health and well-being.
- Create a negative environment at school or school-related activities for an individual, group or the whole school.

Cyber-Bullying

Cyber-bullying is the act of engaging in bullying behaviours through electronic means such as social media platforms, email, text or direct messaging, digital gaming and/or communication applications. Examples of cyber-bullying may include:

- Sending or sharing hateful, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating electronic communication or images via text messages, emails, direct messages.
- Revealing information considered to be personal, private, and sensitive without consent.
- Making and/or engaging, and/or participating in fake accounts on social networking sites to impersonate, humiliate and/or exclude others.
- Excluding or disrupting access to, a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts and during digital gaming sessions.

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.

Consistent with our Catholic faith and in the spirit of an inclusive, safe and accepting culture, the Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board believes that bullying has the potential to :

- Negatively affect students' learning, attendance, safety/sense of safety, sense of self-worth and overall mental health and well-being.
- Create a negative environment at school or school-related activities for an individual, group or the whole school.

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. A whole-school approach involving all education and community members is required to prevent bullying.

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. 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.

Building and sustaining a positive school climate is a complex challenge requiring evidence-informed solutions. A whole-school approach involving all education and community partners is needed to bring about systemic change.

The following are among the characteristics of a positive school climate:

- Students, staff members, and parents feel safe, and are safe, included, and accepted.
- All members of the school community demonstrate respect, fairness, and kindness in their interactions, building healthy relationships that are free from discrimination and harassment.
- Students are encouraged and given support to be positive leaders and role models in their school community.
- Open and ongoing dialogue takes place between the principal, staff members, parents, and students. All partners are actively engaged.
- The learning environment, instructional materials, and teaching and assessment strategies reflect the diversity of all learners.
- Every student is inspired and given support to succeed in an environment of high expectations.
- Bullying prevention and awareness-raising strategies for students and staff are reinforced through curriculum-linked programs.

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

The board has a comprehensive prevention and awareness-raising strategy that includes the board code of conduct (Policy 4024), that sets expectations for appropriate student behaviour. The prevention and awareness-raising strategy also includes teaching approaches that support school-wide bullying prevention and awareness. The focus is on healthy relationships that highlight equity and inclusive education principles throughout the Catholic curriculum in daily classroom instruction and school activities. Schools need to provide opportunities for all students to participate in equity and inclusive education, bullying prevention, and leadership initiatives.

In addition, the board commits to undertake the following initiatives:

School Climate Surveys

As required by PPM 144 *Bullying Prevention and Intervention*, the board is required to conduct anonymous school climate surveys at least once every two years. These surveys must include questions on bullying/harassment related to issues of bias, prejudice or hate. The principal will provide information from the school climate surveys to the school team for review and input into the School Improvement Plan. The results of the school climate survey will be shared with the school community.

The board will inform parents that the School Climate Surveys are voluntary and they can choose to not have their child participate in the process. The board will ensure that surveys are anonymous.

Safe And Accepting School Teams

Schools must have in place a Safe and Accepting Schools Team responsible for fostering a safe, inclusive and accepting school climate that must be chaired by a staff member and include the principal, at least one parent, teacher, non-teaching staff member or community partner. It should also include at least one students. The requirement for the Safe and Accepting Schools Team can be fulfilled by an existing school committee (e.g., the healthy schools committee).

Board and School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plans

The board will establish a bullying prevention and intervention plan for the schools of the board, and require that all schools implement the board's plan in accordance with the Education Act. When establishing its plan, the views of students, teachers, principals, and other staff of the board, volunteers working in the schools, parents, school councils, and the community will be solicited as required by the Education Act. The views of the board's Special Education Advisory Committee, the Indigenous Education Committee, Parent Involvement Committee and Student Senate will also be solicited, along with community partners (e.g., social service agencies; mental health agencies; and other appropriate community groups).

The plan must be made available to the public on both the board and schools' websites. The bullying prevention and intervention plan must be reviewed every two years, and be consistent with the policies in PPM 144.

PROGRAMS, INTERVENTIONS, AND OTHER SUPPORTS

As required by the Education Act, the board provides programs, interventions, or other supports for students who have been bullied, students who have witnessed incidents of bullying, and students who have engaged in bullying. The programs, interventions, and other supports may be provided by social workers, psychologists, or other professionals who have training in similar fields, as determined by the board.

Strategies in Support of Bullying Prevention and Intervention:

- Schools will establish programs, such as bullying prevention and citizenship development, as well as positive activities designed to promote the building of healthy relationships and appropriate behaviour.
- Schools will focus on prevention and early intervention as a key to maintaining a positive school environment in which students can learn.
- Schools will develop prevention measures and initiatives that include the whole school and all aspects of school life.
- A positive “school climate” is a crucial component of prevention; it may be defined as the learning environment and relationships found within a school and school community.

Opportunities for Bullying Prevention Training:

- All students will have the opportunity to participate in bullying prevention training and leadership initiatives within their own school.

In addition to teachers and administrators, other staff, such as educational assistants, social workers, school support staff, and other members of the community all play an important role in supporting students and contributing to a positive learning and teaching environment.

Teaching Strategies:

- Teaching strategies will support the school-wide bullying prevention strategies.
- Teaching strategies will focus on developing healthy relationships by including bullying prevention throughout the curriculum in daily classroom teaching.
- In every grade, a distinctive Catholic curriculum based on the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations will include bullying prevention strategies such as conflict resolution and peer mediation. Teachers must be aware of these links and use them to promote tolerance, respect and empathy, all of which are important components of bullying prevention.

Intervention Strategies:

- Intervention to stop bullying is a community responsibility including school administrators, teachers, board professional staff, parents, students, parish teams and community agencies.
- The goal of intervention measures is to stop incidences of bullying and to foster a positive learning and teaching environment that supports student learning and well-being.
- 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 promotes 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 is critical to sustaining and promoting positive student behaviour.
- Information about reporting incidences of bullying safely and in a way that will minimize the possibility of reprisal will be provided to students and parents.

Suspensions and Expulsions for Bullying:

The board's approach to suspension and expulsion for bullying is in alignment with the policies related to Ontario Regulation 440/20: Suspension of Elementary School Pupils.

Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3:

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.

Principals must suspend students in junior kindergarten to grade 3 for incidents of bullying if:

- Their continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person.
- 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).

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.

Grades 4-12:

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:

- 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.
- 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.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Bullying prevention requires input and participation from everyone in the school community. All stakeholders have a role to play to prevent bullying.

Principal

In addressing bullying prevention and intervention, the principal will take a leadership role in the school, evidenced by:

- Demonstrating care for the school community and a commitment to academic excellence in a safe, inclusive and accepting teaching and learning environment;
- Holding everyone accountable for their behaviour and actions;
- Empowering students to be positive leaders in the school and community;
- Communicating regularly and meaningfully with all members of the school community;
- Ensuring the communication of the bullying prevention policy and procedural guidelines includes a communication plan that outlines how these provisions will be made clear to the entire school community;
- Following a serious incident, notify the parents of the involved students and invite the parents to discuss supports for their child.
- Considering interventions, supports and consequences that align with the student's strengths and needs, as well as with the program goals and learning expectations as documented in an Individual Education Plan (IEP);
- Providing an example of respect and civility for all members of the school community.

Teachers and Other School Staff Members

Under the leadership of their principals, teachers and other school staff members maintain order in the school and are expected to hold everyone to the highest standard of respectful and responsible behaviour. As role models, teachers and school staff uphold these high standards when they:

- Help students work to their full potential and develop their sense of self-worth;
- Empower students to be positive leaders in their classroom, school, and community;
- Encourage students to report incidents of bullying and support, monitor and act upon all reported incidents, to ensure the safety of all students;
- Communicate regularly and meaningfully with parents;
- Maintain consistent standards of behaviours for all students;
- Demonstrate respect for all students, staff, parents, volunteers, and the members of the school community;
- Prepare students to be responsible citizens who give witness to Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice and the sacredness of human life.

Teachers shall also assist principals in maintaining close co-operation with the school community and in establishing and maintaining consistent disciplinary practices in the school. In addition, teachers must assist the principals by reporting incidents of bullying and assisting the principal in conducting an investigation.

Parents

As primary caregivers and original role models for their children, and as partners in Catholic Education, parents play an important role in the education of their children and have a responsibility to support the school community in maintaining a Christ-centred, safe and respectful learning environment for all members.

Parents fulfill their role when they:

- Are actively engaged in their child's school work and progress, social development and faith development;
- Communicate regularly with the school;
- Read and familiarize themselves with information provided by the school regarding ministry, board, and school policies and procedural guidelines;
- Support and model behaviour outlined in ministry, board and/or school policy and procedural guidelines by demonstrating respect for all students, staff, volunteers, other parents and members of the community;
- Work with the school community to prevent, address, and correct discipline issues involving their child;
- Assist staff and principals through representation on local catholic school councils and participation in establishing the schools code of conduct and bullying prevention and intervention plan.

Parents also assist staff and principals through representation on local catholic school councils and participation in reviewing and supporting the school's code of conduct and safe schools' policy.

Students

Ideally, bullying prevention strategies will engage students to examine their own behaviour as the party engaging in bullying behaviour, or by-stander, and commit to a shared mission of Christ-centred, safe and healthy schools free from bullying.

Bullying prevention strategies will also support students who are victims by examining strategies that can help them to positively address bullying behaviour.

Students must demonstrate respect for themselves, for others, and for the responsibilities of citizenship through acceptable behaviour. Respect and responsibility are demonstrated when a student:

- Fulfills the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations and lives the Gospel message;
- Comes to school prepared, on time, and ready to learn;
- Shows respect for self, others, and those in authority;
- Refrains from bringing anything to school that may compromise the safety of others; and
- Follows the established rules and takes responsibility for his or her own actions.

Students are also expected to:

- Practice kindness in their daily lives;
- Exercise self-discipline;
- Accept such discipline as would be exercised by a kind, firm and judicious parent;
- Be courteous to fellow pupils and obedient and courteous to staff;
- Show respect for school property; and
- Understand and comply with their school's code of conduct.

Training Strategies for Members of the School Community

Training programs regarding bullying prevention and intervention will be put in place for all administrators, teachers and educational assistants. This training will include cultural sensitivity, respect for diversity and special education needs. Training may be made available to all other adults that have significant contact with students, including, but not limited to, other school staff, school bus drivers and volunteers.

See Policy 4024 Safe Schools and Workplaces and the accompanying procedural guidelines for obligations to respond to and report inappropriate behaviour, including bullying.

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

The board will establish and provide professional development programs to educate teachers and other school staff about bullying prevention and strategies for promoting a positive school climate. These strategies include those that are Catholic curriculum-linked, those that respond to all forms of bullying, information to new teachers, and resources to other adults with significant contact with students (e.g. school bus operators/drivers, volunteers, etc.).

Communication and Outreach Strategies

- This policy will be posted on the board web site and communicated to principals, students, parents, teachers, committees of the board, Catholic School Advisory Councils, the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee, Student Senate, volunteers and school bus operators or drivers and any other school staff;
- Members of the school community, including, but not limited to, principals, teachers, parents and students will be made aware of their roles and responsibilities under this policy.

Monitoring and Review

The board will establish a monitoring and review process to determine the effectiveness of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and its related procedures. This process will include the following:

- An analysis of the school climate through anonymous surveys of students provided by their schools; and

- Monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of Policy 4016 Bullying Prevention and Intervention and its procedural guidelines.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Consistent with the Safe Schools Act and the Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board Code of Conduct, all students, staff, parents and community members will demonstrate respect for others and contribute to a shared responsibility to create and maintain Christ-centred, safe, caring and accepting schools and workplaces free from bullying.

RELATED POLICIES

Policy 4024 - Safe Schools and Workplaces
with procedural guidelines that include: Code of Conduct, Student Discipline, Pupil Suspension and Expulsion

Policy 4015 – Acceptable Use of Information and Communication Technology
Resources with procedural guidelines that include: Acceptable Use of Information and Communication Technology Resources, Personal Electronic Devices (PED), Google G-Suite

RELATED ACTS AND MINISTRY OF EDUCATION DOCUMENTS

Guide to the Release of Student Information and Protection of Privacy Act RSO 1990
Education Act
Criminal Code of Canada
Occupational Health and Safety Act
Ontario Human Rights Code
Youth Criminal Justice Act
Policy/Program Memorandum 119 – Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario schools
Policy/Program Memorandum 120 – Reporting Violent Incidents to the Ministry of Education
Policy/Program Memorandum 128 – The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct
Policy/Program Memorandum 144 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention
Policy/Program Memorandum 145 – Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour
Policy/Program Memorandum 149 – Protocol for Partnerships with External Agencies for Provision of Services by Regulated Health Professionals, Regulated Social Service Professionals, and Paraprofessionals
Policy/Program Memorandum 159 – Collaborative Professionalism