Huron-Superior Catholic
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Board Plan

Purpose

The Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board (HSCDSB) believes that all people are created in the image and likeness of God and, as such, have the right to be treated with dignity, respect and fairness. The Board further recognizes the importance of ensuring a safe, inclusive and accepting school environment, and that the most effective means to address bullying is through a comprehensive school-wide approach that engages all stakeholders in these efforts.

The purpose of this Board Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is to develop, in consultation with students, principals, teachers and other staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, school councils and the public, a long-term school-wide approach regarding bullying prevention and intervention to be implemented by all schools of the HSCDSB. The plan will be reviewed at least every two years while seeking input from stakeholders. The HSCDSB further recognizes that a key factor in the development of a successful bullying prevention and intervention plan is the consistent use of research-approved best practices. The HSCDSB shall also strive to consider local needs (geographical, cultural, and demographics) and the availability of supports when developing and reviewing this plan.

This plan is based upon the Ministry of Education's Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (the "Model Plan")[1] released January 29, 2013, and the requirements set out in this Plan have been taken directly from the Model Plan. As required by the Model Plan, when revising its plan, the HSCDSB will:

- Review school climate surveys to identify concerns.
- Identify best practices of evidence-informed programs currently used.
- Consider what other evidence-based practices may help address concerns.
- Identify key collaborators within the Board in respect of its bullying initiatives, and others who could be included as possible collaborators.

As required under subsection 303.3(3) of the Education Act[2], each school is required to implement this plan, and to comply with the Board's policies and procedures regarding Bullying Prevention

and Intervention. Through information gathered in the school climate surveys, the board will identify the most appropriate strategies to include in the bullying prevention and intervention plan.

Education, Awareness and Outreach

The HSCDSB and each school will endeavour to increase education, awareness, and outreach. Through this approach, it will help to engage all members of the school community in supporting school and board efforts to deal with inappropriate student behaviour, including bullying. Communications with the school community will include the following definition of bullying given in subsection 1(1) of the Education Act:

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 indirection. 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.

Definition of 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:

- Communication or images via test 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-consentual 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.

The Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board and its schools will strive to:

- Identify different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying.
- Understand the myths and realities of bullying behaviour.
- Identify bullying and differentiate bullying from conflict, aggression and teasing.
- Understand power and peer dynamics.
- Identify how biases, prejudice and hate can lead to bullying.
- Identify different manifestations and underlying factors of bullying (e.g., body image, racism, sexism, homophobia, disability).

In addition, each school will take the following steps:

- Understand a whole school approach and the essential importance of a positive school climate for student achievement and well-being.
- Develop 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. In doing so, the following will be done:
    - Reflect on relationships and interactions and focus on promoting healthy relationships using a variety of strategies.
    - Become knowledgeable about community partners and available resources
- Communicate and share with the school community policies and procedures including 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.

Evaluation of Evidence

Pre-evaluation Strategy

Each school will base its bullying interventions, strategies, practices and programs on evidence. Each school will take the following steps to assess their anti-bullying initiatives and strategies:

- Identify the main issues of concern in a particular school raised by students, school staff, parents, as well as identify issues in the physical environment.
- Conduct a needs assessment, (e.g., what are the current processes for reporting, responding, supporting and following up on issues).
- Develop a pre- and post-evaluation strategy. These should be informed by the results of school climate surveys and other relevant information which may include suspension and expulsion data, the board violent incident report, and reviews of programs and strategies. Steps in an evaluation strategy would include:
    - Creating a baseline and identifying areas of concern.
    - Measuring success.
    - Making changes where necessary.
    - Creating an action plan to address areas of concern.
- 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). Consider a risk assessment approach in order to do this.
- Identify learning and training opportunities that are needed.
- Review and update the plan as a result of gathering new information.
- Share the plan with the school community.

Post-evaluation Strategy

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

Policies and Procedures

Each school will:

- Actively communicate policies and procedural guidelines to the community.
- Review policies and procedural guidelines and include the school community in this process in order to build upon and sustain a positive school climate.

- Review procedural guidelines or develop new ones to address discrimination and harassment as they may apply to students, staff, parents and community members.
- Outline roles/responsibilities of the school community, including students, staff, parents, and community members.
- Ensure goals address area of challenge, as identified in school climate surveys and other relevant data.

Prevention

Fostering a positive learning environment will help to reduce possible bullying, harassment, and discrimination incidents. Schools will take the following steps in order to strengthen prevention measures:

- Describe the roles and responsibilities of the school team which will be communicated with the school community.
- Identify bullying prevention and intervention programs or activities that are evidence-informed and that address the needs identified by the board or a school. These should be addressed at the following levels:
    - Activities that promote a positive school climate.
    - Training strategies for school staff.
    - Awareness raising strategies for students, (e.g., social-emotional learning, empathy, developing self-regulation skills).
    - Awareness raising strategies to engage community partners and parents in early and ongoing dialogue.
    - Ways to make linkages to curriculum resources and day-to-day learning.
    - Caring adults and student leaders within the school and school community.
- Provide opportunities for regular check-ins with students at risk of engaging in bullying, and those who have witnessed or been affected by bullying.
- Provide opportunities for teachers to develop effective classroom management strategies, incorporating progressive discipline.
- Establish and maintain respectful and caring classrooms (e.g., model equitable and inclusive behaviour and language).
- Align supervision plans to address where and when bullying happens.

Intervention and Support Strategies

Interventions and supports should be evidence-informed, timely and take a whole school approach. When implementing interventions and supports, schools should endeavour to:

- Use “teachable moments” within a progressive discipline approach to address inappropriate behaviour.
- Consider mitigating factors like the student’s age, the circumstances of the behaviour, and the student’s history before determining the most appropriate way to respond to each situation. Consider a range of options to address the behaviour and help the student learn from his or her choices.
- Have in place processes and strategies to identify, and respond to bullying when it happens.
- Follow up after bullying incident(s) with students, parents, teachers and other school staff, where appropriate.
- Identify strategies for supporting students who engage in bullying, who have been bullied, and others who may have witnessed or been affected by bullying while respecting privacy. Strategies could include school-based resources and/or referrals to community agencies, (e.g., mental health services or public health).
- Communicate to the school community the progressive discipline approach to address inappropriate behaviour and the procedures that are in place to support students who have been harmed or who have engaged in serious behaviour incidents.