



The Northwest Catholic District School Board

Section	Number	
H	07	C

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Title: Safe and Accepting Schools: Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Purpose:

Bullying adversely affects healthy relationships, the school climate, and a school's ability to educate its students. It impacts negatively on students' ability to learn. Bullying will not be accepted on school property, at school-related activities, on school buses, or in any other circumstances where engaging in bullying will have a negative impact on the life of the school.

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 inclusion should be 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 (PPM 144).

Providing students with an opportunity to learn and develop in a safe, inclusive, and accepting school climate is a shared responsibility in which school boards and schools play an important role. Schools that have bullying prevention and intervention policies foster a positive learning and teaching environment that supports student achievement and well-being and helps students reach their full potential.

This administrative procedure has been developed to provide direction to the system for the prevention of bullying and for intervention when inappropriate behaviour occurs.

1. Provincial definition of Bullying:

"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:

- 1) 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;
- 2) 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 behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

Cyber-Bullying includes bullying by electronic means (cyber-bullying) including:

- a) creating a web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of any other 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.

Aggressive behaviour may be intentional, unintentional, direct or indirect and it may take many forms:

- Physical - may include hitting, pushing, slapping, tripping;
- Verbal - may include name calling, mocking, insults, threats, and sexist, racist, homophobic or transphobic comments;
- Social - may involve gossiping, spreading rumours, exclusion, humiliation using public gestures or graffiti and shunning or ignoring.
(Social aggression 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 messaging, internet websites, social networking or other technology).

Harm can be experienced in a number of ways: physical, mental, emotional and psychological. (PPM 144)

Bullying can be social, physical, verbal and/or electronic (cyber bullying).

(Bullying: We can all help stop it: A Guide for Parents of Elementary and Secondary School Students, 2006).

Bullying

- Adversely affects students' ability to learn
- Adversely affects healthy relationships and the school climate
- Adversely affects a school's ability to educate students
- Will not be tolerated on school property, at school related activities, on school buses, or in any other circumstance (e.g. online) where engaging in bullying will have a negative impact on the school climate.

2. Provincial Definition of Harassment:

Harassment is words, conduct or action that is directed at an individual and serves no legitimate purpose and which annoys, alarms or causes that individual emotional distress. Harassment occurs when an individual is repeatedly singled out for serious mistreatment, which may include threats, bullying, verbal assault, taunting, ostracizing or violent gestures and actions.

The term "harassment" is used in human rights codes as one form of discrimination. Administrative Procedure H-17 - Human Rights deals with harassment based on the enumerated grounds in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. Administrative procedure H-17 is to be consulted for any example of harassment based on the grounds of race, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation or other

human rights grounds, including any sexual harassment of a student by a student. However, the term of "harassment" is now used outside of the human rights context as well to describe types of inappropriate conduct that are not related to the *Code*.

Both bullying and harassment are related to real or perceived power over others. Students may attain or maintain power over others in the school through real or perceived differences. Some areas of difference may be size, strength, age, intelligence, economic status, social status, solidarity of the peer group, religion, ethnicity, disability, need for special education, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender and race.

Bullying and harassment are dynamics of unhealthy interaction that can take many forms. Bullying or harassment 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., cyber bullying - spreading rumours, images, or hurtful comments through the use of email, cell phones, text messaging, Internet websites, or other technology).

The Northwest Catholic District School Board in accordance with the Education Act as amended by the Education Amendment Act (Progressive Discipline and School Safety/*Safe Schools Act*), 2007, and the Accepting Schools Act/ Bill 13, 2012, will endeavour to ensure that the school environment is one that reflects character education and the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations. The Board believes that all forms of bullying are unacceptable and will be dealt with in a serious and timely manner.

PROCEDURE:

A. PREVENTION

1. Character Education

Schools, parents and the broader community in The Northwest Catholic District School Board are engaged in character development initiatives. The principles and attributes of character development are universal and transcend socio-economic status, racial, ethno-cultural, linguistic, religious, gender, physical and intellectual ability and other demographic factors.

The Board believes that all stakeholders share in the responsibility to model the attributes of good character. Good character needs to be modelled, taught and practiced by all members of the district's learning community.

Through the system-wide sharing of information, The Northwest Catholic District School Board recognizes and honours best practice initiatives and programs and activities that contribute to character development. Character education provides a foundation of respect and positive behaviours upon which anti-bullying programs can thrive.

2. School-Wide Prevention and Awareness Strategies

A positive school climate is essential to the prevention of bullying behaviour. A positive climate is developed when administrators, teachers and support staff:

- (a) promote the development of healthy and inclusive relationships among the staff and student body and with parents and the broader community;
- (b) provide and support ongoing training for students and staff members that raises awareness of the problem of bullying;

- (c) know and follow administrative procedures related to safe, caring and respectful schools;
- (d) 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;
- (e) post, communicate and enforce clear codes of student conduct;
- (f) **assess the awareness and scope of the bullying problem at the school through school climate** surveys at least once every two years by the Safe Schools Team;
- (g) 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;
- (h) find a variety of ways to reward students for positive, inclusive behaviour and to support them in being positive leaders in their school community;
- (i) encourage parents to participate and become engaged in the life of the school and to volunteer to assist in school activities and projects;
- (j) involve school councils in the development of anti-bullying initiatives and the ongoing implementation of prevention programs;
- (k) share information with parents and school councils about bullying, including ways to support a child who reports being bullied or witnesses bullying. Administrators, teachers and support staff must inform parents about the dangers of encouraging their children to be aggressive or to strike back. They will also provide experienced advice to parents about how to avoid rescuing their children from every challenge and creating over-dependence. Parents and the school can work together 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;
- (l) regularly reinforce the message that bullying will not be tolerated in the school and that everyone must work together to create a positive learning environment.

3. Classroom Prevention Strategies

Positive classroom prevention strategies should include:

- (a) Teachers and support staff who 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. Teachers and support staff engage students in classroom activities and discussions related to bullying and violence, including awareness of the harm that they cause and strategies to reduce them;
- (b) Teachers who provide and regularly reinforce clear expectations for appropriate student behaviour;
- (c) Teachers who provide integrated programs that support bullying prevention strategies. Teachers and support staff focus on developing healthy relationships in classroom lessons and include books that deal with related issues in student reading materials;
- (d) Teachers who promote cooperation by assigning projects that require collaboration. Such cooperation teaches students how to compromise and how to assert without a demanding verbal tone. Teachers vary the grouping of participants in these projects and monitor the treatment of participants in each group;
- (e) All staff ensure that students know what to do when they experience or observe a bullying confrontation. Understanding the process to follow gives the students confidence and a

feeling of security;

- (f) Adhering to Administrative Procedure B-O5, Board Wide Code of Conduct and PPM 144 and 145 and Reg. 472/07, and in addition to the school Code of Conduct Policy, schools shall be required to develop a Bullying prevention plan;
- (g) All schools within the Board establishing procedures for investigating bullying behaviours and use progressive discipline to develop consequences in their own school Code of Conduct-;
- (h) Use of Second Step (Board approved program) and other anti-bullying resources provided by the Ministry of Education in daily classroom teaching. Second Step is a program which has a focus on developing healthy relationships through the teaching of anger management, empathy and conflict management. Other programs or Ministry of Education resources may be used to complement this program (i.e. Roots of Empathy, Bullying – We Can All Help Stop It);
- (i) All schools within the Board will include an anti-bullying statement in their local school Code of Conduct.
- (j) All schools within the Board will have in place a Safe Schools Team responsible for school safety, composed of at least one student, parent, teacher, support staff, **community partner and the principal**. Safe School teams must have a staff chair.

B. INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

1. School-Wide Intervention Strategies

- (a) School administrators, teachers and support staff encourage students to make a confidential report 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.
- (b) Parents who report bullying are given a receptive hearing, followed by investigation and resolution of the allegations.
- (c) 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 Administrative Procedure Board Code of Conduct and Progressive Discipline.
- (d) Bullying is one of the infractions for which a principal may consider suspension from school. The principal will take into account any mitigating or other factors which may apply. A student that has past bullying incidents can be considered for expulsion.

2. Classroom Intervention Strategies

- (a) 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 students who have engaged in bullying, educators support both the student who was harmed and the witness or witnesses.

- (b) Dealing with students who engages in bullying behavior does not necessarily mean confronting that student in front of their peers. Staff should address the student in private. Challenging a student who engages in bullying behaviours in front of their peers, may actually enhance their status and lead to further aggression.
- (c) Teachers or the principal, as appropriate, will notify the parents of both the student who was harmed and the student who has engaged in bullying when a confrontation occurs, and seek to resolve the problem quickly at school. The principal may refer students to counselling services whenever appropriate.
- (d) School staff provides protection and support for students who have been harmed by bullying whenever necessary, including creating a buddy system whereby students have a particular friend or older buddy on whom they can depend.
- (e) Teachers and support staff listen receptively to parents who report bullying and teachers investigate reported circumstances so that immediate and appropriate action can be taken.
- (f) 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.

3. Reporting to Principals

- (a) The purpose of reporting incidents of inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour is to ensure that the principal is aware of any activities taking place in the school for which suspension or expulsion must be considered.

Section 300.2 of Part XIII of the Education Act states that an employee of the Board who becomes aware that a student at a school of the Board may have engaged in an activity for which suspension or expulsion must be considered shall report the matter to the principal as soon as reasonably possible. The employee must consider the safety of others and the urgency of the situation in reporting the incident, but, in any case, must report it to the principal no later than the end of the school day.

- (b) In cases where an immediate action is required, a verbal report to the principal may be made. A written report must be made when it is safe to do so. The principal or staff member will report the bullying incident using H-07-034, "Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part I."
- (c) All employee reports made to the principal must be confirmed in writing, using Form H-07-034 "Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part I" in ([Appendix 1](#)) to this memorandum. Boards must specify on this form any other activities for which a student may be suspended or expelled, according to Board policy. The 'violent incident' box found on this form, must be checked by the principal if the incident is violent in nature (defined in PPM 120). Boards must not make any other modifications to this form.
- (d) Principals are expected to provide information to Board employees on completing the "Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part I" provided ([Appendix 1](#)) to this Administrative Procedure. Employees who are reporting an incident must submit form H-07-034 "Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form" – Part I" to the principal in a timely manner. The principal must provide the person who submitted the report with written acknowledgement of receipt on Form H-07-034 "Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part II" ([Appendix 1](#)). Each report will be assigned a report number.
- (e) If the principal has decided that action must be taken as a result of an incident of bullying,

he or she will file a copy of the reporting form with documentation indicating the action taken in the Ontario Student Record (OSR) of the student whose behaviour was inappropriate. The names of all other students that appear on the form – both aggressors and victims – must be removed from the form before it is filed in the student's OSR.

- (f) Where the principal has taken action in the case of more than one student, a copy of the reporting form and documentation indicating the action taken must be filed in the OSR of each student whose behaviour was inappropriate. The names of all other students that appear on the form – both aggressors and victims – must be removed from the form before it is filed in the OSR of the student whose behaviour was inappropriate.
- (g) In the case of the student that was harmed, no information about the incident must be placed in their OSR, unless the parent/guardian of the student that was harmed expressly requests that it be placed in the OSR.
- (h) In situations where the student that was harmed is also an aggressor and the principal has taken some action short of suspension, no information about the incident must be placed in this student's OSR if the principal has decided not to notify this student's parents/guardians. However, if the principal has notified this student's parents/guardians, information regarding the incident and the action taken will be placed in the OSR.
- (i) The form and documentation must be kept in the OSR for a minimum of one year unless the Board has required a longer period.
- (j) In all cases, the principal must provide the employee who reported the incident with written acknowledgement of receipt of the report, using the "Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part II", and must specify whether action has been taken or no action is required. If no further action is taken by the principal, the principal is not required to retain the report, and should destroy it. Information that could identify the student(s) involved must not be part of the acknowledgement.
- (k) In addition to employees of the Board, school bus drivers are required to report such incidents in writing to the principal of the school.
- (l) Other non-board employees who come into direct contact with students on a regular basis, as outlined in subsection 300.4 (5.3) of Part XIII of the Education Act, ~~to~~ should also report such matters to the principal (e.g., school volunteers, presenters from the community, social workers from outside agencies).

D. INVESTIGATION OF REPORTED BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- (a) Any allegation of bullying shall be investigated by the principal or their designate.
- (b) Information related to bullying behaviour shall be gathered and documented from all students involved, including any witnesses.
- (c) Form H-07-023 Harassment/Bullying Incident Tracking Form will be completed and filed. (Appendix 2).

Notifying Parents:

Principals are required to notify parents of students who have been harmed as a 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.

Principals are required to notify the parents of students who have engaged in serious student incidents and disclose the following information:

- The nature of the activity that resulted in harm to the other students;
- 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 her or his engagement in the activity;
- The principal must invite parents to have a discussion regarding the supports that will be provided for their child.

E. ACTIONS IF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR IS EVIDENT

1. Actions to address incidents of bullying behaviour shall take into account:

- (a) the particular student and circumstances (e.g. mitigating or other factors);
- (b) the nature and severity of the behaviour;
- (c) the impact on the school climate (e.g. the relationship within the school community).

Progressive discipline prior to suspension may include (see Admin. Procedure H-07 B):

- withdrawal of privileges;
- withdrawal from class;
- out of class withdrawal of classroom privileges;
- detention;
- restitution for damages;
- peer mediation;
- restorative damages;
- transfer and consultation between school from which the student is being transferred and the receiving school;
- monitoring of student behaviours;
- the school principal or their designate in consultation with the teacher, determining whether it is appropriate to contact the parents/guardians of the students involved;
- the school principal or their designate requesting assistance from various outside agencies such as the O.P.P. Community Policing Officer, the Attendance Counsellor, or other appropriate.

Intentionally and falsely accusing another student of bullying shall be considered bullying behaviour. Anyone who intentionally disobeys the *Surf Safe On Line Rules and Etiquette* as outlined in the Board's parent brochure will be dealt with in an appropriate manner (see the brochure posted on the Board website www.tncdsb.on.ca, attached to this administrative procedure – Appendix 3).

Formal procedures will be outlined specifically by each school:

- i) At each Safe and Accepting Schools Team meeting or Catholic School Council

meeting, the councils will discuss ways in which the school can foster a safe, inclusive, and accepting school climate.

ii) A school climate survey will be taken by the staff and students on the topic of bullying **every two years**.

iii) The **Second Step** program and other Ministry of Education approved resources will be utilized to support anti-bullying at each school.

(d) All schools within the Board shall distribute Ministry resources readily available for distribution that follow up on Shaping Safer Schools: A bullying prevention plan (e.g. the parent Bullying brochure, Bullying: We can all help stop it: A Guide for Parents of Elementary and Secondary School Students, and Kids Help Line 1 800 668-6868 and/or <http://www.kidshelpphone.ca>).

(e) All schools within the Board will develop a Safe Welcome Program relating to how visitors can gain access to school and how visitors are screened and directed to the office. (Reg. 298, Education Act 305-Access to Schools and Administrative Procedure H07(D), Access to School Premises)

F. PROCEDURE COMMUNICATION

1. The school principal shall review this policy at the beginning of each school year with staff members.
2. The school principal shall review this policy at the beginning of the school year with parents and school council.
3. Board policy mandates that this procedure will be reviewed every three years.

G. SCHOOL LEVEL PLANS

All schools must develop and implement school-wide bullying prevention and intervention plans as part of their School Improvement Plan. Components of these plans must include the following:

- the definition of *bullying* (see page 1-2 of this Administrative Procedure);
- prevention strategies;
- intervention strategies;
- training strategies for members of the school community;
- communication and outreach strategies; and
- a monitoring and review process.

H. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Training, Communication and Outreach

The Board will put in place training strategies on bullying prevention and intervention for all administrators, teachers, and non-teaching staff (including staff in social work, child and youth work, psychology, and related areas, and educational assistants). The training strategies must include 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.

2. Monitoring and Review

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.

Cross Reference to Administrative Procedures/Governance Policies		Date of Implementation	Legal/Ministry of Education Reference
Section	Number		
B D	05 07	February 1, 2008	Education Amendment Act (Progressive Discipline and School Safety) 2007
		Date of Last Review	Shaping Safer Schools: A bullying prevention plan 2006 Bill 13: Accepting Schools Act, 2012 Bill 157: Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act, 2009 Bill 168: Violence and Harassment in the Workplace Safe and Accepting Schools: Promoting a Positive School Climate Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan
F H H	12 07 07(A)	April 20, 2021	The Education Act (sections 265 (l)(m), 170(1)(7.1)(7.2), 300.1,300.2,300.3(1)(2)(3)(4)(5), 300.4(1), 301, 302(1)(2)(3)(4), 305, 306, 310 Regs. 298, 472/07
H H	07(B) 07(D)		The Ontario Human Rights Code
H	04(A)		PPM Nos. 119, 120, 128, 141,142, 144,145