Northeastern Catholic District School Board

SAFE SCHOOLS
BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Administrative Procedure Number: APE034-2

POLICY STATEMENT

The Northeastern Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) believes that all people are created in the image and likeness of God and that every person has the right to be treated with dignity, respect and fairness. The Board recognizes that a positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included and accepted and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions. The NCDSB is committed to building and sustaining safe Catholic school communities where all members and stakeholders share the responsibility of eliminating violence in accordance with our Catholic faith and gospel values. The NCDSB believes that safe learning environments enable students to reach their full academic and spiritual potential.

REFERENCES

Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario, 2010
Policy Program Memorandum (PPM)
- 144 Bullying Prevention and Intervention
- 145 Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour

NCDSB Policy
- E-34 Safe Schools

NCDSB Procedures
- APE034-1 Safe Schools: Code of Conduct
- APE034-3 Safe Schools: Promoting Positive Student Behaviour

DEFINITIONS

Bullying
Bullying means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a student where:
The behaviour is intended by the student to have the effect of, or the student 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, to the individual's reputation or to the individual's property; or
ii) creating a negative environment at a school for another individual; and

The behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the student 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 may include any of the following but is not limited to:

i) physical (example: hitting, pushing, slapping, and tripping);
ii) verbal (example: name calling, mocking, insults, threats, and sexist, racist, homophobic, or trans-phobic comments);
iii) social (example: gossiping, spreading rumours, excluding others from a group, humiliating others with public gestures or graffiti, and shunning or ignoring);
iv) electronic (example: spreading rumours, images, or hurtful comments through the use of email, cell phones, text messaging, Internet websites, social networking, or other technology).

Cyber Bullying

Cyber-bullying includes bullying by electronic means, which may include:

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.

PROCEDURES

1.0 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1.1 Bullying prevention and intervention activities promote the development of healthy relationships amongst students which supports a positive Catholic learning environment for all.

1.2 Students who are immersed in a positive Catholic learning environment and are free from bullying are able to give their education the full attention and effort required to achieve successful outcomes.

1.3 The NCDSB is committed to building and sustaining safe Catholic school communities where all members and stakeholders share the responsibility of eliminating violence, bullying, and discrimination, in accordance with our Catholic faith and gospel values.

1.4 The NCDSB and all its employees agree that 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 school climate.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITY OF SUPERVISORY OFFICERS

2.1 Supervisory Officers shall establish a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan for the schools of the Board using the appropriate template, and provide support and direction to ensure that each school implements, reviews, and monitors local plans. The Board Plan shall be reviewed every two years and shared with various stakeholders to solicit input on the plan's components.

2.2 Review school-based plans at least one time annually.

2.3 In collaboration with board personnel and community partners, Supervisory Officers will coordinate and provide regular professional learning opportunities to support staff

in increasing their knowledge and understanding of bullying prevention strategies and strategies to promote a positive school climate.

2.4 In conjunction with initiatives related to Healthy Schools, Mental Health and Well-Being, and Religious Education, Supervisory Officers will encourage and support the use of programs, interventions, and school and community student supports that promote a focus on developing skills for healthy relationships.

2.5 Supervisory Officers shall provide direction to coordinate anonymous school climate surveys at least once every two years. These surveys must include questions on bullying/harassment related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, as well as questions on sexual harassment. As part of the survey process, Supervisory Officers shall require schools to share survey results with various school and board staff to support the creation of relevant goals for School Improvement planning processes.

2.6 Supervisory Officers shall ensure that the board and its schools will actively observe Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week beginning on the third Sunday in November of each year.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRINCIPALS

3.1 Principals shall establish a Safe Schools Team responsible for fostering a safe, inclusive, and accepting school climate. The team shall include at least one parent, one teacher, one non-teaching staff member, one community partner, and the principal. An existing school committee, such as the Catholic School Council, can assume this role.

3.2 Principals, in collaboration with the Safe Schools Team, shall establish a Bullying Prevention and Intervention School Plan, drawn from the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Board Plan. To personalize the plan to local school needs, the Safe Schools Team will:

i) Review relevant and current data that highlights school-specific areas of need (i.e. School Climate Survey results, suspension data, attendance data, Safe Schools Incident Reporting data, etc.).

ii) Identify specific learning activities, programs, and/or events that will be hosted each year to support the development of healthy and positive relationships and to promote a positive school environment.

3.3 Principals shall align supervision schedules to address where and when bullying happens, as identified through school climate surveys and other sources of information.

3.4 In collaboration with school-based support staff, Principals shall coordinate and provide opportunities for regular check-ins with students at risk of engaging in bullying, and those who have witnessed or been affected by bullying.

3.5 As directed by Supervisory Officers, Principals shall conduct anonymous school climate surveys at least once every two years, and share survey results with school and board staff to identify relevant school goals.

3.6 Principals shall develop and promote a method for students to safely report incidences of bullying in a way that minimizes reprisal and stigmatization.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL STAFF

4.1 To support the implementation of these procedures, all staff must ensure they understand the definition of bullying and use the term in an appropriate manner when describing student conduct.

4.2 School staff shall ensure that their instructional and program strategies support the school's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. For teachers and early childhood educators, these strategies should show a clear connection to curriculum expectations and it is recommended that these themes be incorporated into literacy and Religious Education programs.

4.3 Through classroom instruction and specialized program activities, school staff shall:

i) Provide opportunities for students to talk about bullying and define unacceptable behaviours;
ii) Involve students in establishing classroom rules to prevent bullying and to support a positive and welcoming classroom environment;
iii) Provide and regularly reinforce clear expectations for appropriate student behaviour;
iv) Ensure that students know what to do when they experience or observe bullying.

4.4 In collaboration with, and under the direction of, the Principal, school staff shall regularly check-in with students at risk of engaging in bullying, and those who have witnessed or been affected by bullying.

4.5 In accordance with supervision schedules, school staff shall provide attentive supervision to students, both observing and listening to student interactions to identify and respond to inappropriate behavior in a timely and sensitive manner.

4.6 Under the direction of the Principal, school staff shall facilitate student participation in anonymous school climate surveys. Upon request, school staff shall engage in the review of survey results and assist in the identification of relevant school improvement goals.

4.7 To promote and support engagement and involvement in each student's education, school staff shall ensure ongoing communication with parents/guardians regarding individual student behavioural and academic progress and concerns.

4.8 School staff shall participate in professional learning opportunities designed to support increased knowledge and understanding of bullying prevention strategies and strategies to promote a positive school climate.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

5.1 To promote a positive Catholic learning environment for all, students will endeavour to be kind and courteous with all members of the school community, striving to fulfill the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations and living the Gospel message.

5.2 Students shall engage actively in classroom instruction and program activities to ensure they know and understand the following:

i) What bullying is and ways to prevent it;
ii) What to do when they experience or observe bullying; and
iii) Classroom and school rules that describe expectations for their own behaviour.

5.3 Students shall report incidents of bullying to school personnel in a timely manner, following the process outlined by the Principal.

5.4 Students shall participate in learning activities related to equity and inclusivity, bullying prevention, and leadership within their own school.

5.5 Students shall participate in school climate surveys, with parental permission if required.

6.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

6.1 To support the implementation of these procedures, parents/guardians must ensure they understand the definition of bullying and use the term in an appropriate manner when describing student conduct.

6.2 Parents/guardians shall create awareness among their children that bullying is never acceptable, and work in partnership with school staff to address and rectify incidents of bullying behaviour. When necessary, parents/guardians are encouraged to collaborate with school personnel to seek appropriate social, emotional, and/or behavioural supports for their children.

6.3 Parents/guardians shall report incidents of bullying to school personnel in a timely manner, and/or encourage their children to report incidences themselves.

6.4 As a preventative support, parents/guardians are encouraged to support their children's participation in learning activities related to equity and inclusivity, bullying prevention, and leadership within their own school.

6.5 To support school improvement planning, parents/guardians are encouraged to promote the active participation of their children in school climate surveys.

7.0 RELATED FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

TEMPLATE: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Board Plan
TEMPLATE: Bullying Prevention and Intervention School Plan

Chief Executive Officer: *Tricia Stefanic Weltz*
Date: May 2024