Northeastern Catholic District School Board

Bullying Prevention and Intervention School Plan

SCHOOL: Pope Francis Elementary School	DATE OF REVIEW: September 2026

MEMBERS OF THE SAFE SCHOOLS TEAM:

Rosemary Rosso - Principal
Rebecca Getty – Teacher Representation
Brittany Counter – Staff Representation
Parent Representation -TBD

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.

DEFINITIONS

Bullying

Bullying means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a student where:

1. 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
2. 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:

1. physical (example: hitting, pushing, slapping, and tripping);
2. verbal (example: name calling, mocking, insults, threats, and sexist, racist, homophobic, or trans-phobic comments);
3. social (example: gossiping, spreading rumours, excluding others from a group, humiliating others with public gestures or graffiti, and shunning or ignoring);
4. 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:

1. creating a web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
2. impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet;

communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.

AWARENESS STRATEGIES

- School climate surveys are completed a minimum of every two years and results are shared publicly. Our next school climate survey is scheduled for 2026.
- The Code of Conduct is reviewed and shared with a broad range of stakeholders on an annual basis. Ongoing communication of expected behaviours, including a focus on defining bullying, is accomplished through *classroom visits, student assemblies, and parent communications.*
- Bullying Prevention week is celebrated actively by the Board and its schools, beginning the third Sunday in November. This year we plan to explicitly teach problem solving strategies and conflict resolution skills and our read alouds will have an anti-bullying focus.
- All schools have Safe Schools Teams who review school-based data to identify areas of concern related to bullying and implement strategies to reduce incidences and provide ongoing support and learning for students.

PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS

Student and Classroom Level

- Provide opportunities for students to talk about bullying and define unacceptable behaviours.
- Involve students in establishing classroom rules to prevent bullying and to support a positive and welcoming classroom environment.
- Provide and regularly reinforce clear expectations for appropriate student behavior.
- Reward positive behaviour as a reinforcement strategy.
- Consistently enforce school-wide rules and practices to promote positive behaviour.
- Communicate regularly with parents to reinforce expectations.
- Connect with parents/guardians when inappropriate behaviour occurs.
- Develop individual intervention plans for students as needed, with the support of various school personnel.
- Embed the principles of respect, equity and inclusive education through curriculum resources and classroom practices, including links to the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations.
- Support social-emotional learning to build and practices healthy relationship skills through various classroom activities and events, including the active exploration and celebration of the NCDSB Virtues program.
- Connect with community partners to offer unique learning experiences to students in support of establishing social-emotional learning skills and healthy relationships (i.e. Roots of Empathy).

School and Community Level

- Establish and regularly communicate school rules regarding behaviour, including a school Code of Conduct that is shared with students, staff, parents, and community members.
- Establish a Safe Schools Team who reviews local school data and develops bullying prevention and intervention plans.
- Provide training for staff on a variety of themes including responding and reporting to incidents, and identifying and responding to bullying behaviour.
- Conduct school climate surveys and use the data to celebrate progress and establish future goals.
- Review and refine the school's student supervision plan, ensuring known areas of concern are appropriately addressed.
- Actively explore and celebrate the NCDSB Virtues with school-based activities and events.
- Develop a variety of community partnerships to support school programs, including those that promote the development of healthy relationships and foster Catholic faith development.
- Create and promote a safe process for reporting bullying, and ensure all school community members are aware of the process.
- Support student-lead initiatives, activities, and co-curricular clubs that intend to reduce bullying, promote well-being, and demonstrate equity and inclusivity (i.e. Anti-bullying pledges, Pink Shirt Day, P.A.L.S. Playground Program, GSA – Gay-Straight Alliance, etc.).
- Establish opportunities for student recognition to celebrate positive contributions to the school community (i.e. NCDSB Virtues awards, student leadership awards, etc.).

INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES

- Reporting incidents of bullying is the responsibility of all students and staff. Reported incidents of bullying will be investigated and addressed through the teacher and/or principal/vice-principal.
- Incidents of bullying will be followed up with the students involved and their parents/guardians, the students' teachers, and other school staff and community partners where appropriate.
- In line with school board procedures, when addressing incidents of bullying, a progressive discipline approach will be applied, which could include the following for students who engage in bullying:
    - review of expectations;
    - written work assignment with a learning component relevant to the behaviour;
    - direct skills instruction, with opportunities to practice and receive feedback;
    - peer mentoring;
    - detention;
    - peer mediation;
    - restorative justice;
    - referrals for consultation;
    - classroom or school transfer;
    - suspension;
    - expulsion.
- Students who engage in bullying, who have been bullied, or may have witnessed or been affected by bullying will receive support from the school, which may include but is not limited to the following:

- One on one and/or group meetings;
- Learning opportunities;
- Restorative justice;
- Contracts or behaviour plans;
- Referrals to board-based supports and services and/or community partners.

RESOURCES

Northeastern Catholic District School Board Resources

NCDSB Policy E-4 Safe Schools
NCDSB Procedure APE-020 Safe Schools: Code of Conduct
NCDSB Procedure APE 021 Safe Schools: Bullying Prevention and Intervention
NCDSB Procedure APE 022 Safe Schools: Promoting Positive Student Behaviour

NCDSB Mental Health Resources

Provincial and National Resources

Ministry of Education Safe and Accepting Schools
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/safeschools.html

Policy/Program Memorandum No.144: Bullying Prevention and Intervention
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/144.pdf

Policy/Program Memorandum No.145: Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour
http://edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/145.pdf

Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy
www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/equity.pdf

The Promoting Relationships & Eliminating Violence Network (PREVNet)
www.prevnet.ca/

We All Belong
http://www.copahabitat.ca/en/bullying/bullying-capsules

Bullying – We Can All Help To Stop It
https://www.ontario.ca/page/bullying-we-can-all-help-stop-it