



Durham Catholic District School Board

“The Board”

Administrative Procedure

Title: Bullying Prevention and Intervention	Procedure #: AP612-1
Administrative Area:	Student Conduct and Safety
Policy Reference:	Bullying Prevention and Intervention (PO612)
Date Approved:	June 23, 2008
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1.0 **Purpose**

The purpose of this Administrative Procedure is to ensure that all members of the school community are treated with respect and dignity through the implementation of the Board Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan in all elementary and secondary schools. It is the expectation that schools develop and use a whole school approach to provide students with the opportunity to learn and develop in a safe, inclusive and accepting school community. This procedure emphasizes the importance of addressing bullying, which can have a significant impact on student safety, learning and school climate.

2.0 **Definitions**

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:
 - i) 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, or
 - ii) 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;

For the purposes of the definition of “bullying”, behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

2.0 **Definitions** (Cont'd)

Bullying (Cont'd)

Cyber-bullying – for the purposes of the definition of cyber-bullying, this includes bullying by electronic means (commonly known as cyber-bullying), including,

- (a) creating any social media site in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or an institution;
- (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 or unintentional, direct or indirect. It can take many forms, including physical, verbal, and social. If aggressive behaviour is physical, it may include hitting, pushing, slapping, and tripping. If it is verbal, it may include name calling, mocking, insults, threats, and sexist, racist, homophobic, or transphobic comments. If it is social, or relational, aggression, it is more subtle and may involve such behaviours as gossiping, spreading rumours, excluding others from a group, humiliating others with 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).

Harassment is a form of discrimination. It can include sexually explicit or other inappropriate comments, questions, jokes, name-calling, images, email and social media, transphobic, homophobic or other bullying, sexual advances, touching and other unwelcome and ongoing behaviour that insults, demeans, harms or threatens a person in some way. Assault or other violent behaviour is also a criminal matter. Trans people and other persons can experience harassing behaviour because of their gender identity or expression (gender-based harassment) and/or their sex (sexual harassment).

Harm – can be experienced in a number of ways, including physical, mental, emotional and psychological.

Impact of School Climate - an incident or activity which has a negative impact on the school community.

Individual Education Plan (IEP) – a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student. It identifies learning expectations that are modified from or alternative to the expectations given in the curriculum policy document for the appropriate grade and subject or course, and/or any accommodations and special education services needed to assist the student in achieving his or her learning expectations.

- For students with the possibility of unsafe behaviours, an IEP should include:
 - Program modifications and/or accommodations that support proactive strategies.
 - Alternative learning expectations outlining skills the student will learn which are more socially acceptable. The learning expectations will be found in one more of the areas of social skills, self-regulation and social communication.

- Appropriate teaching strategies, behaviour management strategies and assessment/evaluation methods related to each behavioural learning expectation.

Mitigating and Other Factors – circumstances that must be considered by the board and school administrators in situations involving suspension and/or expulsion of a student, as required by the *Education Act* and as set out in Ontario Regulation 472/07.

(a) *Mitigating Factors*

- i) The pupil does not have the ability to control his or her behaviour.
- ii) The pupil does not have the ability to understand the foreseeable consequences of his or her behaviour.

(b) *Other Factors*

- i) The pupil's history.
- ii) Whether a progressive discipline approach has been used with the pupil.
- iii) Whether the activity for which the pupil may be or is being suspended or expelled was related to any harassment of the pupil because of his or her race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation or to any other harassment.
- iv) How the suspension or expulsion would affect the pupil's ongoing education.
- v) The age of the pupil.
- vi) In the case of a pupil for whom an individual education plan has been developed:
 - i. Whether the behaviour was a manifestation of a disability identified in the pupil's individual education plan;
 - ii. Whether appropriate individualized accommodation has been provided, and
 - iii. Whether the suspension or expulsion is likely to result in an aggravation or worsening of the pupil's behaviour or conduct.

Positive Practices - the Board supports the use of positive practices such as: program modifications or accommodations; class placement; positive encouragement and reinforcement; individual peer and group counselling; conflict resolution; anti-bullying and violence prevention programs; sensitivity programs; and School, Board, and Community Support Programs.

Progressive Discipline - Progressive Discipline is a whole school approach that utilizes a continuum of interventions, supports and consequences to address inappropriate student behaviour and builds upon strategies that promote positive behaviours. Progressive Discipline may include, but not limited to, consultation; school community service; withdrawal of privileges; withdrawal from class; detention; restitution for damages; peer mediation; restorative practice; suspension; and/or expulsion.

School Activity - any Board or school sponsored activity, included but not limited to field trips, bus trips, sporting activities and dances.

School Climate is the sum total of all of the personal relationships within a school. When these personal relationships are founded in mutual acceptance and inclusion, and

modeled by all, a culture of respect becomes the norm. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable, and accepted. A positive school climate is a crucial component of bullying prevention.

School Community - the school community is composed of staff, pupils and parents of the school, and associate schools, as well as the community of people and businesses that are served by or located in the greater neighbourhood of the school.

3.0 **Procedures**

3.1 Prevention and Awareness Raising

3.1.1 Each school will actively promote and communicate its School Code of Conduct which includes expectations for appropriate student behaviours.

3.1.2 The Board and the schools will participate in on-going education in the area of bullying prevention and intervention in order to keep up to date on current research and teaching practices including but not limited to:

3.1.2.1 Identifying different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying;

3.1.2.2 Understanding the myths and realities of bullying behaviour;

3.1.2.3 Identifying bullying and how it is different from conflict, aggression and teasing;

3.1.2.4 Understanding power, peer dynamics and relationships;

3.1.2.5 Identifying how biases, prejudice and hate can lead to bullying; and

3.1.2.6 Identifying different signs and underlying factors of bullying, such as body image, racism, sexism, homophobia, disability, etc.

3.1.3 School staff should participate in on-going professional development and learning to:

3.1.3.1 Understand the “whole school approach” to developing a positive school climate for student achievement and well-being;

3.1.3.2 Understand the factors that contribute to a safe, inclusive, and accepting school climate;

3.1.3.3 Identify ways to teach students how they can help prevent and respond to bullying;

3.1.3.4 Identify strategies that students and parents can use to safely report incidents of bullying;

3.1.3.5 Identify ways to engage parents in preventing bullying and promoting a positive school climate;

3.1.3.6 Become knowledgeable about community partners and resources available in the community;

- 3.1.3.7 Understand the principles of Equity and Inclusive Education.
- 3.1.4 Board Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan
 - 3.1.4.1 All schools of the Board must implement the Board's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The Board plan will be available on the Board's website and on the individual school websites.
- 3.1.5 Safe and Accepting Schools Teams
 - 3.1.5.1 Each school must have in place a safe and accepting schools team responsible for fostering a safe, inclusive, and accepting school climate that should include at least one student and must include at least one parent, one teacher, one non-teaching staff member, one community partner, and the principal. An existing school committee (e.g., the healthy schools committee) can assume this role. The chair of this team must be a staff member.
- 3.1.6 School Climate Survey
 - 3.1.6.1 As part of the monitoring and evaluation of safe schools practices, each school must participate in the anonymous school climate survey of students, staff and parents at least once every two years.
- 3.1.7 Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week
 - 3.1.7.1 All schools must participate in the Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week established by the Ministry of Education as beginning on the third Sunday in November of each year with the purpose is to heighten awareness and understanding of bullying and the impact it can have on the overall school environment.
- 3.2 Progressive Discipline Approach to Bullying
 - 3.2.1 Progressive Discipline is a whole school approach that involves all members of the school community and uses a continuum of prevention programs, interventions, supports and consequences to promote and support positive behaviours and address inappropriate behaviour including bullying. When bullying occurs, disciplinary measures may be applied. The Progressive Discipline Continuum includes creating a positive school and classroom climate, early, ongoing and collaborative intervention, Suspension or Expulsion, restoration and reconciliation are both corrective and supportive and not simply punitive.
 - 3.2.2 Consistent with the Student Discipline Administrative Procedure (AP611-1) and the Ontario Human Rights Code, schools are required to provide programs, interventions and other supports for students who have been bullied, students who have witnessed incidents of bullying and students who have engaged in bullying. Plans should utilize a range of interventions, supports and consequences that are developmentally appropriate and include learning opportunities for reinforcing and fostering positive behaviour and supporting students in making good choices.

- 3.2.3 For students with special education needs, the interventions, supports and consequences must be consistent with the expectations outlined in the student's Individual Education Plan, (e.g., behaviour goals) and Safety Plan.
- 3.2.4 Creating a positive school and classroom climate
- 3.2.4.1 Catholic school communities strive to create positive school and classroom climates by promoting the dignity and worth of all members of the school community. All members of the school community demonstrate accountability and responsibility for their thoughts, words and deeds. Opportunities for contemplation, reconciliation and forgiveness are created when harm has been done to a member of the school community.
- 3.2.4.2 Strategies for creating a positive school climate may include, but are not limited to:
- 3.2.4.2.1 fostering a safe and accepting school environment by establishing rules and routines that can be implemented by all members;
- 3.2.4.2.2 reviewing and explaining the School Code of Conduct to the students at the beginning of the school year as needed;
- 3.2.4.2.3 engaging all parents/guardians in the school community;
- 3.2.4.2.4 implementing relationship building and community building programs at the individual, small group, classroom and school level (e.g., social-emotional learning, self-regulation strategies);
- 3.2.4.2.5 implementing school improvement goals to address all aspects of the well-being strategy:
- 3.2.4.2.5.1 Safe and Accepting Schools;
- 3.2.4.2.5.2 Equity and Inclusive Education;
- 3.2.4.2.5.3 Positive Mental Health;
- 3.2.4.2.5.4 Healthy Schools;
- 3.2.4.2.5.5 ongoing communication with parents/guardians.
- 3.2.4.1.6 Strategies for creating a positive classroom climate may include, but are not limited to:
- 3.2.4.1.6.1 fostering a safe and accepting environment;
- 3.2.4.1.6.2 utilizing a restorative mindset;
- 3.2.4.1.6.3 co-constructing, communicating and reinforcing classroom and school expectations;
- 3.2.4.1.6.4 recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of all students;

- 3.2.4.1.6.5 focusing on developing positive relationship skills;
- 3.2.4.1.6.6 implementing proactive management of stress behaviours;
- 3.2.4.1.6.7 using community/restorative circles;
- 3.2.4.1.6.8 ongoing communication with parents/guardians.

3.2.5 Early, ongoing and collaborative intervention

3.2.5.1 Progressive Discipline includes the use of early and ongoing prevention and intervention strategies to address inappropriate behaviour and maintain a positive school environment. Intervention strategies should provide students with the necessary supports to address inappropriate behaviour. Parents/Guardians should be actively engaged in developing and implementing the prevention and intervention strategies.

3.2.5.2 Early, ongoing and collaborative intervention strategies may include, but are not limited to:

- 3.2.5.2.1 using positive reinforcement and encouragement;
- 3.2.5.2.2 collecting and analyzing data to determine the function of the behaviour;
- 3.2.5.2.3 making program modifications or accommodations;
- 3.2.5.2.4 development and on-going review of IEP by school team;
- 3.2.5.2.5 development and on-going review of alternate expectations to address lagging skills in behaviour;
- 3.2.5.2.6 reviewing of Code of Conduct and/or classroom expectations;
- 3.2.5.2.7 using verbal and non-verbal reminders;
- 3.2.5.2.8 meeting with student;
- 3.2.5.2.9 loss of privilege;
- 3.2.5.2.10 providing reflection sheet;
- 3.2.5.2.11 initiating or reviewing Behaviour Contracts.

3.3 Suspension and Expulsion for Bullying

- 3.3.1 In recognition of the importance of addressing bullying, which can have a significant impact on student safety, learning and the school climate, bullying is one of the activities for which suspension must be considered.
- 3.3.2 Under the Education Act, principals must suspend a student for bullying and consider referring that student for expulsion if (1) the student has previously been suspended for bullying, and (2) the student's continuing presence in the school creates, in the principal's opinion, an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person. When both of these conditions are met, the principal must suspend the student and consider referring the student for an expulsion hearing.
- 3.3.3 Principals must also suspend a student, and consider referring that student for expulsion, for any incident under subsection 306(1) of the Education Act, including bullying, that 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 (e.g., socio-economic status, appearance).
- 3.3.4 The Education Act gives the principal the sole responsibility to suspend or expel a student based on the list of infractions in the Student Discipline Policy (PO611) and the Code of Conduct Policy (PO610). The principal must consider the mitigating and other factors as listed in the Safe Schools Act prior to making the decision to suspend or expel a student. Decisions regarding appropriate discipline should be unique to each student. Based on the individual factors, and mitigating other factors associated with each student, the principal must decide on the appropriate consequences and supports for each student.

3.4 Notifying Parents

- 3.4.1 Decision to Notify the Parent/Guardian of the victim
 - 3.4.1.1 Following an incident for which the principal will be considering imposing a suspension or making a recommendation for expulsion, he/she shall provide information to the parent/guardian of the victim, unless in the opinion of the principal or vice-principal providing information to the victim's parent/guardian would put the victim at risk of harm and would not be in the victim's best interest. Where the victim is an adult student, the principal or vice-principal shall inform the parent/guardian only with the victim's consent.
 - 3.4.1.2 When notifying the parent/guardian of the student who has been the victim of an incident, the principal or vice-principal shall identify:
 - 3.4.1.2.1 the nature of the incident that caused the student harm;

- 3.4.1.2.2 the nature of the harm to the student;
 - 3.4.1.2.3 its impact on the student to the degree known by the principal or vice-principal;
 - 3.4.1.2.4 the steps being taken by the school to protect the student's safety including any disciplinary measures taken in response to the activity and supports being provided.
- 3.4.1.3 In addition, where the victim has been harassed, bullied, or suffered violence because of any grounds protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code, or has been sexually assaulted, the principal or vice-principal shall share contact information about professional supports available in the Board and in the community in a form accessible to the parent/guardian. A written list of community contacts will be made available to the victim and/or the victim's parent/guardian.
- 3.4.1.4 The principal or vice-principal may communicate to the victim and the victim's parent/guardian:
- 3.4.1.4.1 any school-wide initiatives or preventative measures that have been or will be implemented as a result of the incident and/or other similar incidents;
 - 3.4.1.4.2 confirmation that the student(s) disciplined will no longer be attending the same school as the victim, if this is the case.
- 3.4.1.5 The Principal or Vice-Principal Shall Not:
- 3.4.1.5.1 identify the names of the student(s) disciplined or confirm the identity of the student(s) disciplined;
 - 3.4.1.5.2 provide other personal information about the student(s) disciplined such that his/her personal identity might be determined or confirmed;
 - 3.4.1.5.3 disclose the specific disciplinary measures that might have been imposed.
- 3.4.1.6 The principal or vice-principal shall also inform that parent/guardian that, if the parent/guardian is not satisfied with the measures being taken to protect and support the victim, the parent/guardian may contact the Family of Schools Superintendent to request a review of the measures being taken by the school.

3.4.2 Decision to Not Notify a Parent/Guardian

3.4.2.1 Where, in the opinion of the principal/vice-principal, providing information to a student's parent/guardian would put the student at risk of harm, such that notification would not be in the student's best interests, or where the student is an adult student and does not consent to his/her parent/guardian being informed, the principal/vice-principal shall not inform the student's parent/guardian.

3.4.2.2 The principal or vice-principal shall:

- 3.4.2.2.1 consider, as a result of the student's disclosure, whether or not the student is a child in need of protection and, if so, make a report to the Children's Aid Society, and if in doubt, the principal or vice-principal shall make an anonymous consultation call to CAS to inquire about the appropriateness of making a report;
- 3.4.2.2.2 document why the parent/guardian was not notified;
- 3.4.2.2.3 inform his/her superintendent that the parent/guardian was not informed and why;
- 3.4.2.2.4 inform the teacher or whichever individual informed the principal or vice-principal of the potential for harm, that the parent/guardian was not informed and why; and
- 3.4.2.2.5 inform other staff working to support the student, as appropriate.

3.5 Reporting to the Principal

3.5.1 Schools must consistently take the appropriate action to address behaviours that are contrary to provincial, Board and school Codes of Conduct. In order to ensure a consistent school-level application of Progressive Discipline consequences, the principal shall review each year with all staff members their duty to report breaches to the school Code of Conduct. This review shall include instructions regarding the process for reporting of incidents both in person and by using the Safe Schools Incident Reporting tool on MyDCDSB.

3.5.2 Provided that there is no immediate risk of physical harm to the employee, Board employees who work with students are expected to:

- 3.5.2.1 respond to any inappropriate or disrespectful behaviour;
- 3.5.2.2 respond to any behaviour that could have a negative impact on school climate;

- 3.5.2.3 respond to any behaviour for which a suspension or expulsion may be imposed. This includes any behaviour that an employee may have observed or heard during the course of his/her duties, while on school property or during a school related event;
 - 3.5.3 Staff response should be timely and supportive in an effort to stop and correct the behaviour in a manner that is developmentally appropriate and takes into consideration any special and/or disability related needs that the student might exhibit or about which the employee might be aware. Responses may include one or more of:
 - 3.5.3.1 asking the student to stop the behaviour;
 - 3.5.3.2 identifying the behaviour as inappropriate and disrespectful;
 - 3.5.3.3 explaining the impact of the behaviour on others and the school climate;
 - 3.5.3.4 modelling appropriate communication;
 - 3.5.3.5 asking the student to correct his/her behaviour by restating or rephrasing the appropriate response;
 - 3.5.3.6 asking the student to acknowledge his/her behaviour as being inappropriate; and
 - 3.5.3.7 asking the student to explain why and how a different choice or decisions would have been more appropriate and respectful.
 - 3.5.4 A response by a staff member to the incident shall not prevent or preclude the principal from imposing appropriate consequences up to and including a recommendation for expulsion from all schools.
- 3.6 **Communication and Outreach Strategies**
 - 3.6.1 To support a whole-school approach, schools must actively communicate the Board policies and guidelines on bullying prevention and intervention to teachers, and other school staff; students; parents; school councils; and school bus operators and drivers and other appropriate community partners.
 - 3.6.2 It is important that the roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community (e.g., principals, teachers, other school staff, students, parents) be clearly articulated and understood.
 - 3.6.3 Parents play a key role in the development of safe, inclusive and accepting schools. When parents are engaged and involved in their children's education, everyone benefits, and our schools become increasingly rich and positive places to teach, learn, and grow.

3.7 Monitoring and Review

3.7.1 Each year, as part of the Student Well-Being and Achievement School Improvement Plan, Bullying Awareness and Prevention should be reviewed and goals determined by:

3.7.1.1 Assessing the current strengths and concerns about bullying and the perceptions around the issue;

3.7.1.2 Determining the effectiveness of existing practices;

3.7.1.3 Identifying needs;

3.7.1.4 Prioritizing goals and creating a bullying prevention action plan;

3.7.1.5 Evaluating progress and celebrating successes.

3.8 Possible Goals for Bullying Prevention and Intervention as Part of the School Improvement Plan might address:

3.8.1 Roles and responsibilities of the school's Safe and Caring School Team

Implementation and review of the Code of Conduct;

3.8.2 Bullying awareness and prevention training for staff, students and parents;

3.8.3 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Curriculum implementation and ways to link anti-bullying initiatives to curriculum and day-to-day learning;

3.8.4 Relationship Skills Development;

3.8.5 Awareness raising strategies for students: e.g., social emotional learning, empathy, developing self-regulation skills;

3.8.6 Equity and Inclusive Education training for staff;

3.8.7 Positive mental health strategies;

3.8.8 Restorative Practice Learning;

3.8.9 Enhanced Student Voice opportunities;

3.8.10 Strategies for Reporting Bullying.

3.8.11 Strategies to address the results of the Safe Schools Climate Survey (e.g., focusing supervision of students on where and when bullying happens)

4.0 **Sources**

- Education Act
- Safe and Accepting Schools Act, 2012
- PPM 128 - Provincial Code of Conduct
- PPM 144 - Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy
- PPM 145 – Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour Policy
- PPM 141 – School Board Programs for Students on Long - Term Suspension
- PPM 142 – School Board Programs for Students Expelled
- Ontario Human Rights Code

5.0 **References**

- Code of Conduct Administrative Procedure (AP610-1)
- Student Discipline Administrative Procedure (AP611-1)
- Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy (PO612)