



**DURHAM CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**
Learning and Living in Faith

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE – AP612-1

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Area: Student Conduct and Safety

Policy Reference: Bullying Prevention and Intervention (PO612)

Approved: June 23, 2008

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1. 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 Durham Catholic District School Board (the “Board”) Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan in all elementary and secondary schools. This administrative procedure emphasizes the importance of addressing bullying, which can have a significant impact on student safety, learning, and school climate.

2. Definitions

Bullying (*Education Act, RSO, 1990, c.E.2*) – 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;
- c) bullying behaviour includes using any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

Cyber-bullying (*PPM 144 Bullying Prevention and Intervention*) – 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.

Progressive Discipline (*PPM 145 Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour*) – a whole-school approach that utilizes a continuum of prevention programs, interventions, supports and consequences to address inappropriate student behaviour and to build upon strategies that promote positive behaviours.

Restorative Practices (*International Institute for Restorative Practices*) – Used in conflict resolution, to create dialogue, to bridge divides across groups, and to build cultures where everyone has a voice, can work effectively together, and can be more innovative.

School Climate (*PPM 145 Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour*) – 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, comfortable, and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions. A positive school climate is a crucial component of bullying prevention.

3. 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 ongoing 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:
 - a) Identifying different types of bullying, e.g., cyber-bullying;
 - b) Understanding the myths and realities of bullying behaviour;
 - c) Identifying bullying and how it is different from conflict, aggression and teasing;
 - d) Understanding power, peer dynamics and relationships;
 - e) Identifying how biases, prejudice and hate can lead to bullying; and
 - f) Identifying different signs and underlying factors of bullying, such as body image, racism, sexism, homophobia, disability, etc.
 - g) Understand the “whole-school approach” to developing a positive school climate for student achievement and well-being;
 - h) Understand the factors that contribute to a safe, inclusive, and accepting school climate;
 - i) Identify ways to teach students how they can help prevent and respond to bullying;
 - j) Identify strategies that students and parents/guardians can use to safely report incidents of bullying;

- k) Identify ways to engage parents/guardians in preventing bullying and promoting a positive school climate;
- l) Become knowledgeable about community partners and culturally responsive resources available in the community; and
- m) Understand the principles of anti-Indigenous racism and the principles of Equity and Inclusive Education (e.g., identifying biases and eliminating discriminatory practices and systemic barriers) (Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan, 2017).

3.1.3 Board Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

- a) 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.

3.1.4 Safe and Accepting Schools Team

- a) Each school must establish and utilize a safe and accepting schools' team responsible for cultivating a safe, inclusive, and accepting school climate that should include at least one student and must include at least one parent/guardian, 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.

3.1.5 Climate Surveys

- a) As part of the monitoring and evaluation of safe school's practices, each school is encouraged to participate in an anonymous climate survey of students, staff and parents/guardians.

3.1.6 Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week

- a) 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 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 school-wide proactive and supportive approach that uses a continuum of prevention programs, interventions, support, and consequences to promote and support positive behaviours and address inappropriate behaviour including bullying. Mitigating factors must be considered when bullying occurs, and 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.

- 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 cultivating positive behaviour and supporting students in making good choices.
- 3.2.3 Interventions, supports, and consequences must consider mitigating factors, the history, lived experiences and developmental abilities of the student, and in the case of a student with an Individual Education Plan (IEP), be reflective of the learning needs outlined in the student's IEP (e.g., self-regulation goals) and Safety Plan, if applicable.
- 3.2.4 Creating a positive school and classroom climate
- a) Catholic school communities strive to create positive school and classroom climates by respecting the dignity and worth of all members of the school community. All members of the school community demonstrate accountability and responsibility for their words and deeds aligning with the beliefs, teachings, and faith traditions of the Catholic Church.
 - b) Strategies for creating a positive school climate may include, but are not limited to:
 - i. cultivating a safe and accepting school environment by establishing rules and routines that can be implemented by all members;
 - ii. reviewing and explaining the School Code of Conduct to students at the beginning of the school year as needed;
 - iii. engaging all parents/guardians in the school community (e.g., school newsletters, Catholic School Council, etc.);
 - iv. implementing relationship building and community building programs at the individual, small group, classroom, and school level (e.g., social-emotional learning, self-regulation strategies)²
 - v. implementing school improvement goals to address all aspects of the well-being strategy:
 - Safe and Accepting Schools;
 - Equity and Inclusive Education;
 - Positive Mental Health;
 - Healthy Schools;
 - Ongoing communication with parents/guardians.

- vi. Strategies for creating a positive classroom climate may include, but are not limited to:
- Establishing a safe and accepting environment;
 - Utilizing a restorative mindset;
 - Co-constructing, communicating, and reinforcing classroom and school expectations;
 - Recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of all students;
 - Focusing on developing positive relationship skills;
 - Implementing proactive management of stress behaviours;
 - Using community/restorative circles;
 - Ongoing communication with parents/guardians.

3.2.5 Early, ongoing, and collaborative intervention

- a) A whole-school approach to early, ongoing, and collaborative intervention shall be taken to create and maintain a positive school environment. Intervention strategies should promote positive behaviours and provide students with the necessary supports and tools to address inappropriate behaviour when it occurs.
- b) Schools should be proactive in building understanding with parents/guardians about school-wide approaches to prevention and intervention strategies through sharing of plans and providing opportunities for feedback.
- c) Early, ongoing, and collaborative intervention strategies may include, but are not limited to:
- i. using positive reinforcement and encouragement;
 - ii. using restorative practices;
 - iii. accessing supports of culturally responsive community partners;
 - iv. collecting and analyzing data to determine the function of the student's behaviour;
 - v. considering program modifications or accommodations;
 - vi. inviting collaboration of parents/guardians through a school team meeting or other, less formal process;
 - vii. development and ongoing review of supports for student and/or IEP (if applicable) by school team;
 - viii. development and ongoing review of alternate expectations to address behaviour;

- ix. reviewing of Code of Conduct and/or classroom expectations;
- x. using verbal and non-verbal reminders;
- xi. regular meetings with student and student check-ins;
- xii. loss of privilege;
- xiii. initiating or reviewing behaviour contracts;
- xiv. contact with parent/guardian;
- xv. use of restorative practices; and
- xvi. consult with administration.

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 is considered.
- 3.3.2 Under the Education Act, principals must suspend a student for bullying and consider referring the 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 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 and other factors associated with each student, the principal must decide on the appropriate consequences and supports for each student.

3.4 Notifying Parents/Guardians

- 3.4.1 Decision to Notify the Parent/Guardian of the Student Who is Bullied

- a) Following an incident for which the principal will consider imposing a suspension or making a recommendation for expulsion, they shall provide information to the parent/guardian of the student who is bullied, unless in the opinion of the principal or vice principal providing information to the student's parent/guardian would put the student at risk of harm and would not be in their best interest. Where the student who is bullied is an adult student, the principal or vice principal shall inform the parent/guardian only with the aforementioned student's consent.
- b) When notifying the parent/guardian of the student who is bullied of an incident, the principal or vice principal shall identify:
 - i. the nature of the incident that caused the student harm;
 - ii. the nature of the harm to the student;
 - iii. 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.
- c) In addition, where a student has been harassed, bullied, or suffered violence because of any grounds protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code, the principal or vice principal shall share contact information about professional supports available within the Board, and the community in a form accessible to the parent/guardian. A written list of community contacts will be made available to the student who has been bullied and or their parent/guardian.
- d) The principal or vice principal may communicate to the student who has been bullied and their parent/guardian:
 - i. 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.
 - ii. Confirmation that the student(s) disciplined will no longer be attending the same school as the student who has been bullied, if this is the case.
- e) When notifying a parent/guardian of a student who has been bullied, the principal shall not disclose the name of, or any other identifying personal information about, a student who engaged in the activity that resulted in harm, except insofar as is necessary to comply with section 3.4.1 b) above.
- f) 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 student who has been bullied, 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

- a) 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 their parent/guardian being informed, the principal/vice principal shall not inform the student's parent/guardian.
- b) The principal or vice principal shall:
 - i. 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 (CAS) or Dnaagdawenmag Binoojiiyag Child & Family Services (DBCFS), and if in doubt, the principal or vice principal shall make an anonymous consultation call to CAS or DBCFS to inquire about the appropriateness of making a report;
 - ii. document why the parent/guardian was not notified;
 - iii. inform their superintendent that the parent/guardian was not informed and why;
 - iv. 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
 - v. 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. 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 of the school's 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 During the course of their duties, provided that there is no immediate risk of physical harm to the employee, Board employees who work with students are expected to respond to:

- a) any inappropriate or disrespectful behaviour;
- b) any behaviour that could have a negative impact on school climate; and
- c) respond to and report any behaviour they have witnessed or been made aware of, 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 responses 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 of the student(s) involved. Responses may include one or more of:

- a) asking the student to stop the behaviour;
- b) identifying the behaviour as inappropriate and disrespectful;
- c) explaining the impact of the behaviour on others and the school climate;
- d) modelling appropriate communication;
- e) asking the student to correct their behaviour by restating or rephrasing the appropriate reason;
- f) asking the student to acknowledge their behaviour as being inappropriate; and
- g) 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.

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/guardians; 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/guardians) be clearly articulated and understood.

3.6.3 Parents/guardians should be encouraged to play a key role in the development of safe, inclusive and accepting schools.

3.7 Monitoring and Review

3.7.1 Each year, bullying awareness and prevention should be reviewed and goals determined by:

- a) assessing the current strengths and concerns about bullying and the perceptions around the issue;
- b) determining the effectiveness of existing practices;
- c) identifying needs;
- d) prioritizing goals and creating a bullying prevention action plan; and
- e) evaluating progress and celebrating successes.

3.8 Goals for bullying prevention and intervention may include, but are not limited to:

- 3.8.1 roles and responsibilities of the school's Safe and Caring School Team Implementation and review of the school's Code of Conduct;
- 3.8.2 bullying awareness and prevention training for staff, students, and parents/guardians;
- 3.8.3 bullying prevention and intervention programs and ways to link anti-bullying initiatives to curriculum and day-to-day learning;
- 3.8.4 relationship skills development;
- 3.8.5 strategies to raise awareness 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 Practices;
- 3.8.9 enhanced student voice opportunities;
- 3.8.10 strategies for reporting bullying;
- 3.8.11 strategies to address the results of climate surveys (e.g., focusing supervision of students on where and when bullying happens).

4. Sources

- 4.1 [Accepting Schools Act](#)
- 4.2 [Education Act](#)
- 4.3 [Ontario Human Rights Code](#)
- 4.4 [Policy/Program Memorandum 128: Provincial Code of Conduct](#)
- 4.5 [Policy/Program Memorandum 141: School Board Programs for Students on Long-Term Suspension](#)
- 4.6 [Policy/Program Memorandum 142: School Board Programs for Students Expelled](#)
- 4.7 [Policy/Program Memorandum 144: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy](#)
- 4.8 [Policy/Program Memorandum 145: Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour Policy](#)

5. Appendices

Nil

6. Related Policies and Administrative Procedures

- 6.1 [Anti-Racism Policy \(PO200\)](#)

- 6.2 Responding to Incidents of Racism and Discrimination Administrative Procedure (AP200-1)
- 6.3 Equity and Inclusive Education Policy (PO216)
- 6.4 Student Protection Policy (PO607)
- 6.5 Student Protection Administrative Procedure (AP607-1)
- 6.6 Code of Conduct Policy (PO610)
- 6.7 Code of Conduct Administrative Procedure (AP610-1)
- 6.8 Student Discipline Policy (PO611)
- 6.9 Student Discipline Administrative Procedure (AP611-1)
- 6.10 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy (PO612)