Proactive Bullying Prevention

Bullying prevention is a collective responsibility embedded within the daily life, routines and learning environments that shape school culture. Safe, caring and inclusive spaces are intentionally nurtured by amplifying student voice, teaching social-emotional skills and ensuring every student experiences a deep sense of value and connection. The following reflection questions are intended to support school teams in our ongoing commitment to upholding Human Rights and Indigenous Rights, identities, well-being, kindness, connection and community and safe learning environments throughout the school year.

Reflection Questions:

- How are community-building routines and regular check-ins fostering trusting relationships, and what evidence do we have that they are helping address patterns of disproportionality identified in the HDSB and our school data?
- In what ways are students actively co-designing classroom agreements, norms, routines and expectations so that they have opportunities to build conflict resolution, authentic relationships and problem-solving skills?
- How are we explicitly teaching, recognizing and nurturing kindness, perspective taking and empathy in all of our classrooms and throughout the school community (such as active inclusion, respectful communication, helping others and conflict resolution)?
- Is mental-health literacy being consistently taught, modelled and expected in all classrooms (i.e., explicitly teaching social-emotional vocabulary, identification and management of emotions, and self-regulation techniques), and how do we know?

Some Examples Include:

- Staff will embed one inclusive community-building routine (morning meetings, circles, check-ins, partner activities) into daily practice.
- Staff will dedicate the first 10 minutes of the week to a collaborative, student-led review of classroom norms, allowing students to anonymously or publicly suggest adjustments.
- Staff will dedicate the final 5 minutes of each day to an intentional recognition routine (such as peer-to-peer shout-outs, kindness circles, or an appreciation board) where students identify, celebrate and uphold the shared values of empathy, active inclusion, and collaboration.
- Staff are explicitly teaching identity-affirming social-emotional vocabulary by co-creating and integrating mental-health classroom resources (e.g., visual representation, anchor charts, UDL strategies).
- All classes will create space in the week to integrate opportunities into the curriculum which foster connection, relationships, and having fun (between peers, classes, cohorts, etc.).

Action/Strategy Identified for Monitoring

Morning arrival routines at Escarpment View Public School are consistently orderly, predictable, and welcoming (e.g., Grades 1–6 line up; Kindergarten and Grades 7–8 utilize staggered arrivals). To ensure students feel equally safe and supported at the end of the school day, successful morning practices are translated directly into structured end-of-day routines.

1) **Closing Ceremonies/End of Day Farewell - Staff will dedicate the final 5-10 minutes of each day to an intentional recognition routine (such as peer-to-peer shout-outs, kindness circles, or an appreciation board). This structured departure ensures students experience active inclusion, peer appreciation, and emotional safety as they transition out of the school environment. It will also help to uphold and celebrate our shared values of kindness and inclusion.**

As a staff, we looked at our existing “Opening Ceremonies” (start of day routines) and generated a list of what we do that works well (e.g. soft start, welcoming them at the door, community circle, self-regulation check-ins, attendance questions). We then generated a list of ideas for parallel “Closing Ceremonies” (end of day routines). Many of these are already happening in classrooms, and our goal is to spread these practices to all classrooms. These strategies will provide structure and inclusion at the end of the day.

Closing Ceremonies:

- Primary: Kindness Circles, Peer Shout-Outs, "Highs and Lows," Check-ins, Exit Questions, Goodbye Routines, 2 Stars & a Wish, Goodbye Songs
- Junior: Bring students back to homeroom prior to dismissal; Kindness Jars/Friendship Corners; Hallway supervision during locker time
- Intermediate: Daily appreciation prompts (e.g. "Best part of the day was..."; “Someone who helped me today was...”), Student Recognition Skits/Memes, and Teacher Shout-Outs

	2) **Explicit teaching about how/when/why/to whom to report bullying: to equip students with explicit vocabulary, reporting pathways, and self-regulation strategies to distinguish between tattling/snitching and reporting bullying, ensuring no student fears social retaliation for seeking help.** ○ Virtual announcements ○ Provide sentence starters, e.g., “can I talk to you privately for a minute?” ○ Revisiting/integration throughout the year ○ Teaching WHAT to report (reference the right to feel safe, accepted and included). ○ This can be our focus for Bullying Prevention and Intervention Week ○ Incorporate into admin-led Code of Conduct lessons ○ Classroom educators will utilize visual charts, social stories/read-alouds, "Big vs. Little Problem" frameworks, and sentence starters to model reporting. ○ Explicit teaching of the difference between “tattling”/“snitching” and reporting; framing the difference around *intention* is (i.e. to “get someone in trouble” vs. advocating for safety, rights, and the well-being of self and/or others in our school community)

Intervention Practices

Responsive and intervention strategies dictate how school communities mobilize the moment bullying or identity-based harm is observed, reported or suspected. In alignment with PPM No. 144 and in order to uphold Human Rights and Indigenous Rights, responsive action cannot simply be punitive or focused on compliance. It requires centering the safety and well-being of the impacted student, timely and appropriate communication with families, consistent with privacy and confidentiality requirements, applying bias-free progressive discipline, and considering relevant systemic factors that allowed the harm to occur.

Crucially, these interventions cannot happen in isolation. To foster genuine reconciliation and a healthy school climate, support must be integrated across all three impacted parties. This requires extending responsive practices to students who witnessed the incident by bolstering whole-class mental health literacy and well-being strategies - such as identifying emotions, stress management, coping and brain-aligned regulation – while explicitly reviewing clear pathways to school-based and community mental health supports through whole-class instruction.

In alignment with the HDSB Bullying Response Protocol and Ministry legislative requirements, all schools must implement and monitor the following core intervention and prevention practices after a bullying incident has occurred. Interventions cannot happen in isolation. To foster genuine reconciliation and a healthy school climate, support must be integrated with all three impacted parties.

- Respond to any student behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on school climate or learning environments by following the steps of the HDSB Bullying Response Protocol.
- Provide responsive regular check-ins and ongoing support for students who have been harmed, students who engaged in bullying and students who witnessed the incidents, following the requirements of the HDSB Bullying Response Protocol.
    - *Examples Include:*
        - Bolster whole class mental health literacy and well-being strategies such as identifying emotions, stress management and coping, and brain-aligned regulation strategies
        - Review pathways to mental health support (such as accessing school-based support sessions or how to connect with community support) with whole class instruction.
- Identify the underlying microaggressions, lived experiences or behavioural drivers as contributing factors rather than simply punishing the surface action.

Reflection Questions:

- What actionable steps are we taking to help students and staff accurately identify bullying and discrimination, rather than minimizing these incidents as "just conflict"?
- How are we actively partnering with students to co-create plans that ensure they feel safe in the school community?
- How are we empowering and equipping students to safely intervene or speak up when they witness harm?
- Which specific social emotional skills (e.g., co-regulation, conflict resolution) need to be developed, and how can we embed this learning into whole-class instruction?
- How are we structuring the classroom environment to facilitate prosocial reentry and sustain long-term support?

School Goal Examples:	**Action/Strategy Identified for Monitoring**

• Following incidents of conflict or bullying, designated school staff will facilitate a structured conversation within three to five school days to address harm, support the student and monitor the effectiveness of the student safety plan.
• Every classroom teacher will explicitly integrate evidence-informed mental health and well-being strategies (such as co-regulation routines, emotional literacy or adaptive coping strategies) into their daily practice, ensuring all students can identify and utilize at least two proactive self-regulation tools.
• Every educator will embed at least one structured, inclusive community-building routine (such as morning meetings, community circles, daily check-ins, or collaborative partner activities) into their daily practice, utilizing these routines to ensure at least one intentional, positive interaction with every student daily while systematically identifying and prioritizing students who require additional connection and tier-two well-being support.
• To prevent ongoing exclusion, students will receive a collaborative, student-responsive re-entry plan that explicitly connects them to at least one prosocial school opportunity (e.g., leadership roles, clubs, or structured mentorship) to rebuild a sense of belonging.
	Make accountability and repair more <u>visible</u> so that the onlookers and student(s) harmed can feel confident that the bullying or harmful language was addressed.
	
	- Staff learning: revisit what to say when stopping and identifying harmful language:
	  - Interrupt the bullying/harmful language right away
	  - Explicitly label the bullying or harmful language (e.g., “I noticed you are being excluded”; "That word is homophobic”)
	  - Explain that bullying/discriminatory and harmful language violates our Code of Conduct and the Ontario Human Rights Code. Reinforce that everyone has the right to feel safe and welcome at school, and that bullying/harmful language makes people feel unsafe and unwelcome.
	  - Ensure all who heard discriminatory and harmful language <u>also</u> hear it being stopped, identified, and explained.
	  - Meet with the student(s) harmed by bullying to reassure them that it is not their fault and that no one deserves to be bullied.
	  - Meet with the student who caused the harm to ensure they understand the impact of their actions and the expectation that the bullying stop immediately.
	- Administrators will ensure that students who are impacted by bullying or harmful language understand how the adults responded and what transformation they might expect from the person who caused the harm.