M.T. Davidson's
Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan
"We All Belong"

Overview

M.T. Davidson has invested time to develop a comprehensive Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. We have entitled this plan *"We ALL Belong"* to reflect the need to build an inclusive culture founded on equity. What follows in this document is the result of this investment with staff, students and the school community. In the course of a day, there are many "teachable moments" when issues appear to arise. Prompt intervention with a few moments of coaching and support at these critical times can help all children and youth, including those who are at risk, to develop the skills and understanding that they need to maintain positive relationships with others. These interactions that students have with their teachers, other school staff, the Principal and fellow students, as well as with their parents and others can be used to help them improve their social skills.

The Context

The Near North District School Board is committed to the establishment of safe, inclusive and accepting school environments in order to maximize the learning potential of all students. There is conclusive research that shows that for students to reach their full potential, they must feel safe, included, and engaged in school.

Bullying is associated with a range of physical and mental health problems, as well as educational problems, antisocial problems, and relationship problems. Experts call for early intervention for both the child who is victimized by bullying and the child who bullies. Without support, children who bully appear to learn how to use power and aggression to dominate others (Craig, Pepler, Murphy 2010). There is a growing base of knowledge and evidence about what works. The Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network (PREVNet) provides comprehensive information on their website about bullying and how to address it.

An inclusive social climate based on caring and respectful relationships among and between students, teachers, school staff, parents and administrators is generally accepted as a necessary supporting condition for learning (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2012).

An effective and inclusive school does more than achieve academic markers; it fosters social-emotional learning and develops healthy relationships among and between staff and students to promote a positive school climate. Committed leadership and ongoing collaboration at all levels (e.g., individual, classroom, school, parent, board, community) among everyone involved are key factors to the success of a whole school approach.

A whole school approach engages all key learning areas, all grades and the wider community. All aspects of school life are considered, such as policies and procedures, curriculum, school climate, teaching and assessment practices, co-curricular and leadership opportunities.

Parents and Students

M.T. Davidson is dedicated to ensuring a safe and caring environment. An administrator will investigate all reports of bullying. If you or your child has any concerns, please contact us immediately.

Providing students with an opportunity to learn and develop in a safe and respectful society is a shared responsibility in which the board and our schools play an important role. Schools with bullying prevention and intervention strategies foster a positive learning and teaching environment that supports academic achievement for all students and that helps students reach their full potential.

"A positive school climate makes negative behaviors such as bullying and harassment unacceptable"
Pepler and Craig, 2004

M.T. Davidson recognizes that bullying:
- Adversely affects a student's ability to learn.
- Adversely affects the school climate, including healthy relationships.
- Will not be accepted on school property, at school-related activities, on school buses, or in any other circumstances

Definition of Bullying and Cyber-Bullying
The Education Act subsection 1(1) defines bullying as follows:
"Bullying" means aggressive and typically repeated behavior by a pupil where; (a) the behavior is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behavior 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 as a school for another individual, and (b) the behavior 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.

Bullying
For the purposes of the definition of "bullying" in subsection (1), behavior includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

Cyber-bullying
For the purposes of the definition of "bullying" in subsection (1), bullying includes bullying by electronic means (commonly known as cyber-bullying), including,
(a) creating a web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
(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.

Examples of Bullying
Electronic
- Sharing messages, photos or videos containing private/sensitive information via electronic means; spreading rumours to threaten someone or hurt their feelings, to single them out, embarrass them, or to make them look bad via social media platforms (also see cyber bullying definition)

Physical
- Pushing, tripping, hitting, shoving, kicking, damaging or stealing someone's property

Social
- excluding someone from "the group" or from an activity, gossiping or spreading rumours about someone, making someone look foolish, making sure others don't associate with someone, displaying images or materials that are offensive or disrespectful

Verbal
- name calling, hurtful teasing, threatening, insulting, mocking or making sexist, racist, religious, disability related, income or homophobic or gender based comments

Written
- use of notes or signs that are hurtful, insulting or harassing

Conflict, Aggression, Teasing and Bullying

Overview
We feel as a school it is important to elicit these ideas from students as this places them in the center of learning. Students creating their own understanding in their own language regarding the following is important to take ownership of the language. Our CDC supports teachers in facilitating this process with students. Students will then present their work at school assemblies.

Conflict

Is generally a disagreement of differences in opinion between peers who typically have equal power in their relationship. Conflict is a usual and inevitable part of group dynamics.

How do we know if it is bullying or conflict?

Children often confuse conflict with bullying, even though they are very different. Conflict consists of a disagreement, or a difference of opinion, between two or more people who are relatively equal in social status. In conflict, there are two sides to the story. Those involved may disagree and emotions may run high. When badly managed, it may even result in some form of aggression. When conflict arises, children need opportunities to talk and resolve the conflict in a constructive manner.

Aggression

Aggressive behavior 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).

Teasing

Teasing involves a sense of play and mutual joking; it is not meant to harm anyone in any way; it is usually not repeated over and over again; and is usually done by someone you have a relationship with (but sometimes people can take teasing too far).

Positive teasing

Children tease because it can be a fun way to provoke a reaction in someone else, and they may want to reciprocate being teased themselves. Teasing can strengthen a relationship by showing closeness and affection with another person. It can help show others what behaviours are appropriate in society: for example, teasing someone for talking with his/her mouth full communicates – without direct confrontation - that this is not a polite and socially accepted behaviour. Teasing also represents an indirect and non-threatening (perhaps even playful) method for resolving conflicts by providing an outlet for expressing frustration or disapproval.

Teasing is positive when:
- It takes place within a strong relationship with two people who appreciate the teasing as affectionate.
- The teaser is using a "joking" (rather than aggressive) tone of voice and smiling.
- The person being teased does not look distressed.

When does teasing become bullying?

While teasing can be used to strengthen a relationship, it can also be used to alienate, criticize, and embarrass another person, which may weaken the relationship. The affectionate interaction of teasing can turn hostile when the teasing distresses the person being teased. Teasing about physical appearance is almost always hostile and hurtful. This is not surprising since appearance has so much influence on social acceptance and is out of the individual's control.

Teasing becomes bullying when:
- The content of the teasing turns from affectionate to hostile.
- There is a power imbalance: the person teasing has more power among peers compared to the person being teased.
- The teasing occurs repeatedly.
- The child who is teasing means to upset or hurt the child being teased.
- The child being teased is upset or hurt by the interaction. Keep in mind that some children may not show that their feelings are hurt. If you are not sure whether the teasing is hurtful, pull the child being teased aside to ask them how they feel about it.

Bullying
Is a persistent pattern of unwelcome or aggressive behavior that often involves an imbalance of power and / or the intention to harm or hurt someone else.   Bullying does not involve play or mutual joking around; there is an intention to hurt and do harm; there is a pattern of behavior; saying mean and hurtful things over and over again; has a negative impact on the victim / target; there is an imbalance of power; one person appears to have more powers than the other.

Members of the Safe Schools Committee
Students: Sophie St. Clair and Brandon Mills
Teacher: Della Oshell (DLRT), Gail Degagne (ELK Teacher)
Support Staff: Sherri Adams (CDC)
Community Partner: Todd Daley – Callander Fire Chief
Principal: Todd Gribbon - Principal

The Role of Staff
The importance of relationship building and modelling with staff is paramount in the success of "We All Belong". Staff will model the Rehearse The Verse, communicate with students and the CDC, DLRT and the Administration regarding their actions and need for support for students.

Bullying Prevention and Awareness Strategies
(Curricular Connections / Activities / Whole School Approach)
M.T. Davidson uses strategies, which promote appropriate student behaviour, including:
- Using the data and information from last year's school climate survey to inform us and to direct changes in our practice to ensure that we are providing a warm and welcoming environment for all
- Promote, model, and maintain a positive school environment that focuses on student achievement and well-being
- Promote an awareness and understanding of the factors that contribute to a safe, inclusive, caring, and accepting school climate
- Promote an awareness and understanding of diversity, acceptance and understanding of all cultures through activities and programming.
- Celebrate and recognize *"Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week"* annually
- Use our partnership with the Local Police Services to provide support and intervention to victims of bullying and the bullies themselves
- "No Bullying" message around the school.
- Working with the Nipissing Parry Sound Health Unit on student led Mental Health initiatives.
- Continue to have activities that promote a positive school climate (hot dog days etc.)
- Encourage more peer to peer presentations and workshops
- Plan whole school guest speakers around character education topics
- Communicate and collaborate with the SAC regarding this matter
- Consider other programs and presentations that our school community would benefit from, as they arise.
- Whole school focus on mental health and well-being and our common ground being character education

Programs and Prevention

Evidence Informed Programs and Practices
- Respect Education – Red Cross
- Dr. Ross Greene - Collaborative and Proactive Solutions (CPS)
- Restorative Practices
- Behavioral Management Strategies (BMS)
- One Page Profiles
- Multiple Intelligence Inventories
- Mind-Up

Prevention Strategies

Bullying Prevention is a whole-school approach that heightens expectations for a safe, caring and inclusive school climate. It includes a shared understanding about the nature and underlying causes of bullying and its effects on the lives of individual students and the school community. We are utilizing the following resources in this regard:

1. Developed a School Wide Behaviour Success Criteria
2. Character Education:
   - Lunch (1) / Month with Principal – highlighting the following Character Attributes:
     - Respect
     - Responsibility
     - Acceptance
3. CDC – Peer Student Support Group
4. Assemblies:
   - Dennis Chippa – Respect Ed
   - Rehearse the Verse – Jim MacLachlan
   - First Nations Grandfather Teaching
   - Student Assemblies
5. Police Liaison Presentation:
   - Cyber Bullying

Individual Level

- Foster respectful relationships and understanding with all
- Hold meetings with students and parents when inappropriate behaviour occurs
- Support positive change and positive behaviour
- Develop individual intervention plans for students involved in serious incidents
- Promote the use of Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS)
- Utilize progressive discipline strategies with students
- Involve support staff where appropriate i.e. Mental Health Nurse, Attendance Counselor, Addictions Counselor and other external agencies

Classroom Level

- Communicate positive behaviour expectations and consistently enforce school-wide rules on behaviour
- Teachers to hold regular class meetings / discussions and communicate regularly with parents
- Give opportunities for social-emotional learning to build and practice healthy relationships skills through classroom activities and programs
- Embed the principles of Respect, Responsibility and Acceptance in discussions
- Utilize peer support groups to support students who require social, emotional and academic support

School Level

- Continue our work with our Safe and Accepting School Committee
- Provide training for staff regarding Mind-Up
- Establish and communicate success criteria regarding behaviour
- Active staff involvement in learning about the data and information that last year's school climate survey has provided us in order to determine our next steps as a school team

Community Level

- Continue to work with our community partners to support the school's programs
- Communicate the school's Code of Conduct and expectations on appropriate behaviour to the school community and our community partners

Bullying Prevention and Reporting Strategies

- All staff will take seriously all allegations of bullying behaviour and immediately attempt to stop any observed action, name the action, reassure the victim, work with the aggressor and report the incident to administration
- All administrators will investigate any reports of bullying, as well as anonymous reports of bullying.

Interventions, Supports and Follow-up

Intervention Strategies

Bullying intervention is a comprehensive and effective response to bullying incidents that takes into consideration all parties involved in the bullying incident. It should provide specific supports for the student who has been bullied, intervention for the student who was bullying, and strategies for responding to students who directly observed the bullying incident.

The school is committed to work with both those who have been bullied and those who bully. Teachers play a major role in this process and work closely with the administration to support both individuals. We understand that a conflict can be used as an opportunity for growth for both individuals. In addition, the school utilizes the following resources and philosophies in this regard: School CDC, Peer Mentoring CPS, Restorative Practices, Peer Mentors, Buddy Bench, The Power of Yet, Growth Mindset and Fixed Mindset, HANDS, One-Kids-Place, The Hub.

Reported incidents of bullying will be investigated and addressed through the teacher and/or Principal. In addressing incidents of bullying mitigating factors such as age, circumstances, and history will be considered. Additionally, progressive discipline will be used when appropriate and could include the following:

- Contact with the pupil's parent(s)/guardian(s);
- Verbal reminders;
- Review of expectations;
- Written work assignment with a learning component relevant to the behavior (i.e. apology, impact statement);
- Assigned reflection time;
- Peer mediation;
- Restorative Practice;
- Referrals for consultation;

In some circumstances suspensions and expulsions may result depending on the severity of the behavior.

Students who engage in bullying, who have been bullied or may have witnessed or been affected by bullying will receive support which may include but is not limited to the following:

- One on one and/or group meetings
- Learning opportunities
- Restorative Practices
- Community liaison officer may be brought in to address a situation of bullying
- Child development counselor, guidance counselor, and social worker will be used to support the victim and the bully
- Contracts or behaviour plans
- Referrals to NNDSB supports and services
- Referrals to community partners

Training Resources and Outreach Strategies for Members of the School Staff, Parents, and Community

- Staff Meeting PD sessions
- Messages and resources included in the weekly staff communication

- School improvement goals developed by, and shared with, staff members
- School Advisory Council (SAC)

Monitoring and Review Process

- Schools must regularly review their Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and seek input from their school communities (at least once every two years);
- The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan must be made available to the school community at the beginning of each school year. Schools must post their Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plans on their school's website, and if that is not possible, it must be made available to the public in another appropriate manner;

Additional Considerations
- The local needs and circumstances such as geographical and cultural considerations as well as demographics;

Suggested Resources

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

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

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

Toolkit for Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools on the Ontario's Institute for Education Leadership
http://live.iel.immix.ca/safeandacceptingschools

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

Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation
www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/inclusiveguide.pdf

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119: Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools
www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/policy.html

Don Miguel Ruiz's The Four Agreements
http://www.miguelruiz.com/