



West Ferris Secondary School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan 2024-2025

Context:

West Ferris Secondary School 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. An inclusive school climate based on caring and respectful relationships among students, teachers, school staff, parents, community partners and administrators is a fundamentally enabling condition for learning.

An effective and inclusive school does more than achieve academic markers; it fosters social-emotional learning and develops healthy relationships among staff, among students, and between staff and students to promote a positive school climate.

Committed leadership and ongoing collaboration at all levels (individual, classroom, school, parent, board, community) among everyone involved are key factors to the success of a whole school approach.

West Ferris Secondary School 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 (e.g. online) where engaging in bullying will have a negative impact on the school climate.

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. Bullying prevention and intervention strategies must be modeled by all members of the school community.

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

The Difference Between Teasing and Bullying (www.prevent.ca):

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.

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.

Definition of Bullying:

Bullying behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means. For the purposes of the definition of bullying, bullying by electronic means (commonly known as cyber-bullying), including, creating a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or 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 web-site that may be accessed by one or more individuals.

- Accepting Schools Act 2012

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**

(1.0.0.1) 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**

(1.0.0.2) 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.

Aggressive behavior may be intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect. *Harm*, as used in this plan, means, harm that can be experienced in a number of ways, including physical, mental, emotional and psychological.

Parents and Students

West Ferris Secondary School 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.

Dr. Gillian Kajganich – 8561

Mr. Scott Barons – 8544

Mrs. Stehanie Harrison– 8543

Mr. Rob Roy - 8431

Forms that Bullying/Harassment Might Take

Physical: pushing, tripping, hitting, damaging or stealing someone's property

Verbal: name-calling, hurtful teasing, insulting, humiliating or threatening someone

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

Electronic: using the Internet or a cell phone to e-mail or send text messages or pictures in order to threaten someone or hurt their feelings; single them out, embarrass them, or make them look bad; or spread rumors or reveal secrets about them

Written: using notes or signs that are hurtful, insulting or harassing

Types and Examples of Bullying/Harassment

Racial/Ethno cultural

Gender role-based

Homophobic

Religion-based

Disability-based

Income-based

Bullying Prevention and Awareness Strategies (Curricular Connections / Activities / Whole School Approach)

West Ferris Secondary School's comprehensive prevention and awareness strategies, which promote appropriate student behaviour, include:

- Using the data and information from the last 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 equity, diversity, inclusion, acceptance and understanding through collaborative activities with our Special Education Personal Life Management programs.
- Promote an awareness and understanding of equity, diversity, acceptance and understanding of all cultures and history through activities and programming.
- Celebrate and recognize *“Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week”* annually
- Create awareness of bullying prevention by staff and students wearing pink on selected dates.
- 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.
- Support LGBTQ by providing a visible space to display materials in the school as well as at a prominent space within the library for books and magazines that promote an inclusive and accepting school climate if a request is made.
- Continue to have activities that promote a positive school climate (spirit days, assemblies, etc.)
- Encourage more peer-to-peer presentations and workshops
- Plan whole school guest speakers around character education topics
- Continue to support SAC initiatives that promote healthy school relationships.
- Consider other programs and presentations that our school community would benefit from, as they arise.
- Include character education and healthy relationship components within specific curriculum strands
- Whole school focus on mental health and well-being and our common ground being character education

Programs and Prevention

Individual Level:

- Foster respectful relationships and understanding with all
- Hold meetings with students and parents when inappropriate behaviour occurs
- Support and celebrate positive change and positive behaviour
- Develop individual intervention plans for students involved in serious incidents
- Promote the use of Collaborative Problem Solving

- 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
- Hold regular class meetings/discussions and communicate regularly with parents
- Give opportunities for social-emotional learning to build and practice healthy relationship skills through classroom activities and programs
- Embed the principles of respect, equity and inclusive education through curriculum resources and classroom practices
- 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 safe and accepting schools
- Establish and communicate school rules 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 schools' 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.

- Students or parents can anonymously report incidents of bullying by calling the school at 705-475-2333.

Interventions, Supports and Follow-up

1. Reported incidents of bullying will be investigated and addressed through the teacher and/or principal/vice-principal. In addressing incidents of bullying mitigating factors such as age, circumstances, history, IEP 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 justice;
 - Referrals for consultation;

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

2. 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 justice
 - 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
- Parent council, website, Twitter, Facebook, and School Connects, in school messages **Safe, Accepting and Inclusive Schools Committee:**

Principal: Gillian Kajganich

Vice Principal: Scott Barons, Stephanie Harrison, Rob Roy

Teachers: Carolyn Samuel, Lisa Miners, Trisha Bradford

Non-Teaching Staff: Sue Beaulieu, CDC

Parent: TBD

Community Partner: TBD – Police Liaison Officer

Students: TBD

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. School's 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

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>

