Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Effective Date: August 22, 2013   **Responsibility:** Superintendent of Safe Schools
Revised Date: August 9, 2017

The Near North District School Board Policy Statement on Bullying

The Near North District School Board 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

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).

- 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.

- Data should be used to inform the development of bullying prevention and intervention plans, including the section of evidence-informed programs and practices. A pre-and post-evaluation strategy is critical.

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
(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. 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).

Harm, as used in this plan, means, harm that can be experienced in a number of ways, including physical, mental, emotional and psychological.

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. Such interactions that students have with their teachers, other school staff, and fellow students, as well as with principals, their parents and others can be used to help them improve their social skills.

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

Prevention

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.

Intervention

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 were directly observing the bullying incident.

Practices

Schools shall ensure that:
- a *Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan* is in place;
- staff who work directly with students - principals, teaching and non-teaching staff must respond to any student behavior that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate. Such behavior includes all inappropriate and disrespectful behavior at any time at school and at any school-related activity;
- bullying shall not be accepted on school property, at school-related activities, on school buses, or in any other circumstances where engaging in bullying will have a negative impact on the school climate;
- policies and procedures on bullying prevention and intervention, and the definition of bullying shall be communicated to students, parents, teachers and other school staff, school councils, volunteers. school bus operators/drivers, child-care providers etc.;
- the school has a Safe Schools Team, composed of at least one student (where appropriate), one parent, one teacher, one support staff, one community partner and the principal. An existing school committee can assume this role;
- every two years School Climate surveys of students from grades 4-12, parents and staff are completed. Data from the School Climate Surveys will be used to inform the School Improvement Plan and the *Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan;*
- the awareness of equity and inclusivity, gender based violence prevention (e.g., positive spaces in schools), and mitigating and other factors on bullying prevention and intervention exists;
- a comprehensive intervention strategy that addresses incidents of bullying, including appropriate and timely responses is developed;
- students can report bullying incidents safely and in a way, that will minimize the possibility of reprisal (i.e., anonymously);
- staff will take seriously all allegations of bullying behavior and act in a timely, sensitive and supportive manner when responding to students who disclose or report bullying incidents;

- principals will investigate any reports of bullying, as well as anonymous reports of bullying;
- for students with special education needs – interventions, supports and consequences are consistent with the student's strengths and needs, as well as program goals and learning expectations documented in his or her Individual Education Plan (IEP);
- strategies are identified for supporting students who engage in bullying, who have been bullied, and others who may have witnessed or been affected by bullying while respecting privacy. These strategies could include school based resources and/or referrals to community agencies;
- follow-up after bullying incidents(s) with students, parents, teachers and other school staff where appropriate will occur;
- they recognize the Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week which has been established in the *Education Act* as beginning on the third Sunday in November of each year. Its purpose is to heighten awareness and understanding of bullying and the impact it can have on the overall school environment.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

- The school develops, implements and monitors a school-wide bullying prevention and intervention plan. Components of the plan will include the following:
  - the context;
  - the definition of bullying and cyber-bullying;
  - examples of bullying;
  - the difference between bullying and conflict, aggression and teasing;
  - the members of the Safe Schools Committee;
  - evidence informed programs and practices;
  - prevention strategies;
  - intervention strategies;
  - the role of staff;
  - learning opportunities for members of the school community;
  - communication and outreach strategies;
  - monitoring and review processes.

- Schools must regularly review their *Bullying Prevention and Intervention Pla*n 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;
- the availability of community supports and resources.

Notifying Parents

Principals will notify parents of students that have been harmed and/or who have engaged in serious behaviour incidents.

To see the complete section, "Notifying Parents(s)/Guardians Following a Serious Student Incident" refer to the Near North District School Board's Administrative Guideline- Safe Schools: Student Conduct Management Guideline, page 14 as well as "Not Notifying a Parent/Guardian" page 15 on the board website.

Reporting to the Principal

The purpose of reporting serious student incidents is to ensure that the principal is aware of any activities taking place in the school for which suspension or expulsion must be considered and to help ensure a positive school climate.

The Education Act subsection 300.2 of Part XIII states that any staff of the Board who becomes aware that a student at a school of the Board may have engaged in a serious student incident shall report the matter to the principal as soon as reasonably possible. The employee must consider the safety of others and the urgency of the situation in reporting the incident, but, in any case, must report it to the principal no later than the end of the school day.

To see the complete section on "Reporting to the Principal" see pages 12-14 of the Near North District School Board's Administrative Guideline- Safe Schools: Student Conduct Management Guideline, on the board website.

Professional Development

The Near North District School Board will continue to provide professional development opportunities to board employees that will include bullying prevention and intervention strategies to promote a positive school climate. The training may also be made available to other adults who have significant contact with students (e.g., school bus drivers, child care providers, volunteers etc.).

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

References

Accepting Schools Act – Bill 13 September 2012
Changes to Policy and Program Memoranda (PPM's) – December 5, 2012
- PPM 128 Provincial Code of Conduct and School Boards Code of Conduct – December 5, 2012
- PPM 141 School Board Programs for Students on Long-Term Suspension – December 5, 2012
- PPM 142 School Board Programs for Expelled Students – December 5, 2012
- PPM 144 Bullying Prevention and Intervention December 5, 2012
- PPM 145 Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behavior – December 5, 2012

Working Draft: Safe and Accepting Schools **Model Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan**, January 2013