



BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN

The plan is organized to provide information in the areas of:

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1. PREAMBLE

A safe, inclusive and accepting school environment is essential for student achievement and well-being. There is conclusive research that shows that to reach their full potential, children and youth 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.¹

An inclusive social climate based on caring and respectful relationships among and between students, teachers, other school staff, parents and administrators is generally accepted as a necessary supporting condition for learning.²

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.

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.

The use of data is also a key factor. Data should be used to inform the development of bullying prevention and intervention plans, including the selection of evidence-informed programs and practices. District School Board Ontario North East (DSB1) uses the School Climate Surveys at each school to collect data from students in the areas of: social-emotional outcomes, physical health outcomes, drivers of student outcomes and demographic factors.

¹ Source: Ontario Ministry of Education. – Wendy M. Craig, Debra J. Pepler, Ashley Murphy, and Heather McCuaig-Edge, "What Works in Bullying Prevention?", in Eric M. Vernberg and Bridget K. Briggs, eds., *Preventing and Treating Bullying and Victimization* ([U.S.A]: Oxford University Press, 2010) pp. 215-42.

² Source: Ontario Ministry of Education. – Adapted quote UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *A Place to Learn: Lessons from Research on Learning Environments*, 2012, pg. 47

2. DEFINITIONS

Bullying: 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
- 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.

Cyber Bullying: bullying (as defined above) by electronic means, 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, (c) communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.

Although cyber bullying usually occurs outside the school, it can negatively affect the learning environment and student safety in the school. Where there is evidence that a student who has been intimidated is impaired in his or her ability to progress in school, or that the cyber bullying affects school safety and security, the Principal will intervene as if the inappropriate behaviour was initiated in the school setting.

3. BULLYING PREVENTION - PROACTIVE MEASURES

Some popular and effective bullying prevention strategies used in DSB1 include:

- communicating expectations and raising awareness about bullying prevention with parents through school websites and newsletters;
- policies for Codes of Conduct provided by the board to ensure bullying prevention is addressed at all sites;
- curriculum expectations using resources infused with character education
- announcements or "thoughts for the day" related to positive decision-making;
- monthly recognition assemblies promoting character attributes;
- co-curricular clubs addressing harm and repair (e.g. GSA - Gay-Straight Alliance, The Motiv8ors);
- The Roots of Empathy, an evidence-based classroom program that has shown significant effect in reducing levels of aggression among school-aged children by raising social/emotional competence and increasing empathy;
- promoting use of the Ontario Ministry of Education website, *Parents* section, for bullying prevention and intervention resources, in addition to other resources listed in this document;
- creating and promoting a safe space/process for reporting bullying;
- establishing GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance) groups in secondary schools in order to address the issue of bullying based on sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation;
- interactive productions and presentations in schools:

4. BULLYING INTERVENTION – RESPONSIVE MEASURES

a) DSB1 Staff Responsive Measures for the Bullied

- facilitate the reporting experience (provide a safe space, time, compassionate attention, reassurance);
- assist the student in identifying and naming the specific bullying behaviours (repeated, intent to harm, power differential);
- provide problem-solving strategies to increase student's sense of safety, to address the bully and to deal with the backlash;
- review processes for continuing to report incidences and monitor well-being;
- use restorative practices (see link in resources area for further information);
- refer student to Board mental health, if needed or desired;
- refer students to the Ontario Ministry of Education's "Anti-Bullying Hotline" in order to report incidents of bullying in a safe, anonymous way (link in resources section);
- encourage the cooperative partnership between Police Services and DSB1 to assist in responding to reports of bullying and violence.

b) DSB1 Staff Responsive Measures for the Bully

- enforce progressive discipline interventions (corrective interventions that support learning);
- communicate with parent/guardian to inform and enlist support and consistency of expectations;
- listen to and help the bully identify "reasons" for bullying behaviour (e.g. *"I was just joking around."* *"I was just trying to make my friends laugh."*);
- provide pressure and support: *"The behaviour must stop. We will help you stop by..."* (keeping you inside at recess this week). *If you don't stop these are the possible future consequences."*;
- use restorative practices (see link in resources area for further information);
- provide direct skills instruction (e.g. emotional self-regulation);
- provide practice, feedback, reinforcement;
- provide conflict mediation and resolution;
- withdraw privilege/allow student to earn back privileges;
- assign detentions;
- withdraw the student that bullies from the class;
- develop Safety Plans through IPRC process, as required;
- refer student to mental health services within our board;
- refer to community agencies;
- assign suspensions and/or expulsions (Education Act - bullying is one of the behaviours leading to possible suspension/expulsion);
- encourage the cooperative partnership between Police Services and DSB1 to assist in responding to reports of bullying and violence.

5. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

DSB1 provides annual professional development opportunities to assist teachers, support staff and administration in managing student behaviour, particularly related to bullying prevention and intervention. Some examples of this professional development include:

- Exploring the curriculum connections related to bullying prevention, social and emotional skills, and critical and creative thinking skills
- Training in Restorative Practices (International Institute for Restorative Practices)
- Mentor coaching training for all administrators
- Various guest speakers, addressing issues of bullying, cyberbullying and equity.
- Additional qualification courses for teachers covering anti-bullying material.

6. COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

This report will be broadly communicated to various stakeholders in DSB1. Some of these communication strategies include:

- Distribution of the plan to all Principals and Vice-Principals via email;
- Reinforcement of strategies through Principal/Vice-Principal meetings with Superintendents of Education;
- Distribution of the plan to School Council Chairs, Special Education Advisory Committee, Parent Involvement Committee and Indigenous Education Advisory Committee;
- Placement of the plan on the DSB1 website: www.dsb1.ca;
- Placement of the plan on the various schools' websites;
- Mention of plan in school newsletters.

7. RESOURCES

DSB1 Policies:

Safe School Policy 2.1.15 Progressive Discipline

Safe Schools Policy 2.1.18 Student Discipline, Bullying Prevention and Intervention

DSB1 Mental Health Resources: <https://www.dsb1.ca/ParentsStudents/Pages/default.aspx>

Ontario Ministry of Education – Bullying: We Can All Help Stop It:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/multi/english/BullyingEN.pdf>

PREVNet – The Promoting Relationships & Eliminating Violence Network: www.prevnet.ca/

Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/equity.pdf>

Ontario's Parent Engagement Policy: www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/policy.html

International Institute for Restorative Practices: www.iirp.edu

Stop A Bully – safe & anonymous reporting tool: www.StopABully.ca

Canadian Centre for Child Protection – NeedHelpNow.ca – helping youth to deal with self/peer exploitation:

<http://www.needhelpnow.ca/app/en/>

8. MONITORING & REVIEW

Fostering a safe, caring and inclusive school climate as well as addressing bullying prevention is complex. Efforts need to be sustained over time. Data from school surveys will be reviewed by school teams on an annual basis to collect current information and revisions to this plan will be made as needed with input from all stakeholders.