



**1. Rationale**

The Simcoe County District School Board recognizes that providing students with an opportunity to learn and develop in a safe and respectful society is a shared responsibility in which school boards and schools play an important role. Schools that have 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 is a crucial component of prevention. Bullying adversely affects a school's ability to educate its students, students' ability to learn, as well as healthy relationships and the school climate.

The Provincial Code of Conduct, the Simcoe County District School Board Code of Conduct, the Education Act, and the Board's discipline policies and procedures create expectations for behaviour for all persons on school property, and outline strategies to be taken to reduce incidents and impose appropriate consequences for pupils. The Board recognizes the primacy of the Human Rights Code of Ontario. Board policies and procedures are subject to and shall be interpreted and applied in accordance with the Human Rights Code of Ontario when addressing issues of discipline with respect to bullying.

**2. Policy**

Bullying 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 has a negative impact on the school climate.

**3. Definitions**

3.1 Bullying is typically a form of repeated, persistent, aggressive behaviour that is directed at an individual(s) that is intended to cause (or should be known to cause) fear, distress and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, or reputation. Bullying occurs in a context where there is real or perceived power imbalance.

Bullying may include bullying because of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, colour, ethnicity, culture, citizenship, ancestry, origin, religion, creed, family status, socio-economic status, disability and/or any other immutable characteristic or ground protected by the Human Rights Code, and despite the truthfulness and/or applicability of the immutable characteristic or ground.

3.2 Positive school climate is the sum total of all the personal relationships within a school. When these relationships are founded in mutual acceptance and inclusion, and modeled by all, a culture of respect becomes the norm. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable and accepted.

**4. Guidelines****4.1 Prevention Strategies**

All students should participate in bully prevention training and leadership initiatives within their own school. These include but are not limited to:

- 4.1.1 daily classroom teaching with curriculum links;
- 4.1.2 character education initiatives;
- 4.1.3 mentorship programs;
- 4.1.4 citizenship development;
- 4.1.5 student leadership;
- 4.1.6 student success strategies;
- 4.1.7 healthy lifestyles initiatives;
- 4.1.8 social skills development.

**4.2 Intervention Strategies**

It is the expectation of the Board that, provided that there is no immediate risk of physical harm to any individual, staff members who work directly with students on a regular basis, shall respond in any incidents of bullying.

Further, incidents of bullying about which a board staff member or a transportation provider becomes aware must be reported to the principal or designate in accordance with Simcoe County District School Board procedures at the earliest, safe opportunity and no later than the end of the school day or transportation run, if reported by a transportation provider. A written report in accordance with the Board's Student Discipline APM A7635 must be made when it is safe to do so.

Responses by staff members who work directly with students on a regular basis might include:

- 4.2.1 asking the student to stop the behaviour;
- 4.2.2 identifying the behaviour as inappropriate and disrespectful and why, including if it offends the dignity of the target and/or is contrary to the Human Rights Code;
- 4.2.3 explaining the impact of the behaviour on others and on school climate;
- 4.2.4 modeling appropriate communication;
- 4.2.5 asking the student for a correction of his/her behaviour by restating or rephrasing his/her comments;
- 4.2.6 asking the student to apologize for his/her behaviour;
- 4.2.7 asking the student to promise not to repeat their behaviour; and

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- 4.2.8 asking the student to explain why or how a different choice with respect to their behaviour would have been more appropriate and respectful.

Intervention requires appropriate and timely responses and should be done in ways that are consistent with a progressive discipline approach and may include early and/or ongoing intervention strategies, such as:

- 4.2.9 contact with parent(s)/guardian(s);
- 4.2.10 review of expectations;
- 4.2.11 written work assignment with a learning component;
- 4.2.12 referral to counselling;
- 4.2.13 consultation.

Progressive discipline may also include a range of interventions, supports and consequences when bullying behaviour has occurred, with a focus on improving behaviour including:

- 4.2.14 meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s), pupil and principal;
- 4.2.15 detentions;
- 4.2.16 withdrawal of privileges;
- 4.2.17 restorative practices;
- 4.2.18 school, board and community support programs.

#### 4.3 Suspension

In recognition of the importance of addressing bullying, which can have a significant impact on student safety, learning and the school climate, bullying has been added to the list of infractions for which suspension must be considered.

#### 4.4 School Level Plans

Schools are required to develop and implement school-wide bullying prevention and intervention plans as part of their School Improvement Plan. Components of these plans must be consistent with the policies and procedures of the Board and must include:

- 4.4.1 the definition of bullying;
- 4.4.2 analysis of the school climate survey (completed every two (2) years);
- 4.4.3 prevention strategies;
- 4.4.4 intervention strategies;
- 4.4.5 procedures to allow students to report bullying incidents safely;
- 4.4.6 training strategies for members of the school community;
- 4.4.7 communication and outreach strategies;
- 4.4.8 monitoring and review processes.

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The Board supports pupils who are victims of serious incidents of bullying causing harm contrary to the provincial, Board, and/or school Codes of Conduct. The principal or designate is required to provide information, in accordance with Board procedures, to the parent/guardian of a pupil who has been harmed, if that pupil is not an adult pupil and provided the principal is of the opinion that informing the parent/guardian would NOT put the pupil at risk of harm. The principal may inform a parent/guardian an adult pupil with consent.

The School shall develop appropriate plans to protect the victim. The School shall communicate those plans to the victim and to the victim's parents/guardians as well as communicating a method of identifying dissatisfaction with steps taken to provide support to the victim. Communication with the victim's parent/guardian shall only take place in circumstances where to do so would, in the principal or designate's opinion, NOT put the pupil at risk of harm.

#### 4.5 Safe Schools Teams

Each school must have a safe schools team that is composed of at least one student (where appropriate), one parent, one teacher, one support member, one community partner and the principal. The team must have a staff chair. An existing school committee can assume this role.

The team shall be responsible for revising their existing school wide bullying prevention and intervention plan to include awareness raising strategies, support strategies that shall include the requirement to create plans to protect victims and reporting requirements when a pupil has been harmed.

### 5. **Administrative Procedures**

The Director of Education is authorized to establish administrative procedures to implement this policy, which shall be considered guidelines pursuant to the Education Act.