



POLICY SECTION: SAFE SCHOOLS

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: Bullying Prevention and Intervention

POLICY NO: S.S. 11

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Cross References:

- Education Act Part XIII, Behaviour, Discipline and Safety
- Program/Policy Memorandum 144, 2012 Bullying Prevention and Intervention
Program/Policy Memorandum 145, 2012 Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour
- **Program/Policy Memorandum 128, The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct**
- Policy/Program Memorandum 149, 2009 Protocol for Partnerships with External Agencies for Provision of Services by Regulated Health Professionals, Regulated Social Services Professionals, and Paraprofessionals
- **The Ontario Human Rights Code – Prohibited Grounds of Discrimination**
- **H.M. 24 Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education Policy**
- S.S. 09 Code of Conduct Policy
- **S.S. 01 Suspension and Expulsion Policy**
- **S.S. 10 Progressive Discipline Policy**

Appendix A: Investigation and Reporting of Student Bully Behaviours

Purpose:

This Policy affirms the need for students to feel safe, **included and welcomed** at school. A whole-school approach is required to raise awareness about inclusion, respect and bullying behaviours in order to provide strategies to intervene and prevent bullying for the ~~target~~ **victim**, the witnesses and bystanders, as well as the ~~perpetrator of~~ **student who engages in** bullying behaviours.



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A safe and positive learning environment is essential for student achievement and well-being, **and to** supporting students to reach their full potential.

Scope and Responsibility:

The policy extends to all students of the TCDSB and assigns specific duties to principals and employees of the board to ensure compliance with the policy and legislation. The Director of Education, the Superintendent of Safe Schools, and school Principals are responsible for this policy.

Alignment with MYSP:

Living Our Catholic Values

Strengthening Public Confidence

Fostering Student Achievement and Well-Being

Financial Impact:

~~The TCDSB Safe Schools Department provides professional learning for TCDSB staff, students and parents in a variety of ways. There would also be costs associated with services provided by external agencies~~

Legal Impact:

~~The Education Act requires school boards to develop goals for promoting a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all students and for promoting the prevention of bullying. There may be liability that is associated with failure to provide appropriate prevention and intervention strategies to address bullying behaviours occurring at schools.~~



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Policy:

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is committed to providing safe, healthy, inclusive, equitable and Christ-centered learning environments that support student achievement and well-being. Bullying adversely affects a student's **well-being and** ability to learn. **Bullying also** ~~and~~ adversely affects the school climate, including healthy relationships. Bullying behaviour will not be accepted on school property, at school-related activities, on school buses, or in other circumstances (**e.g. online**). ~~where engaging in Bullying behaviours that will have an impact on the school climate,~~ **including incidents occurring off school property and outside school hours, will not be accepted.** Bullying behaviours presented by students will be investigated and addressed promptly by the principal, and supports will be provided for the target(s) of bullying behaviours, the individual(s) responsible for the bullying behaviours, and the witnesses and bystanders of the bullying behaviour.

Regulations:

1. Each school in the TCDSB will have a Safe and Accepting Schools Team that will develop a local bullying awareness, prevention and intervention plan consistent with integrating local needs as part of its Safe Schools Plan. The Plan will be posted on each school's portal page.
2. Employees of the board must take seriously all allegations of bullying behaviour and act in a timely, sensitive and supportive manner when responding to students who disclose or report bullying incidents.
3. **Board employees who work directly with students must respond to any student behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate if it is safe to do so. If board employees feel it is not safe to respond, they will be expected to inform the principal verbally as soon as possible.**



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4. Employees, bus drivers, third party service providers, and other individuals identified in the TCDSB Code of Conduct will report to the Principal, as soon as reasonably possible, if they become aware **that** of a student **at a school of the board** who may have engaged in bullying behaviour or any other activity for which suspension or expulsion must be considered. **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. In cases where an immediate action is required, a verbal report to the principal may be made. A written report must be made when it is safe to do so. All employee reports made to the principal, including those made verbally, must be confirmed in writing using the The Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form-Part I must be completed and submitted to the principal by the end of the school day.**

5. The Principal **must investigate all reports submitted by board employees. The principal** will communicate the results of the investigation to the **teacher who made the report. If a board employee who is not a teacher made the report, the principal will communicate the results of the investigation to that employee if the principal considers it appropriate. In all cases, the principal will provide the employee who reported the incident with written acknowledgement using the Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part II.** ~~employee who made the written report.~~
 Where the principal has taken action in response to the incident of bullying, a copy of Reporting Form-Part I and accompanying documentation will be filed in the student's OSR **as per the Ministry of Education requirement.**

6. Principals will investigate any report of bullying and will notify the parent/guardian of the student who was harmed and provide information about the **nature of the** activity that led to the harm, **the nature of the**



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harm to the student and the steps taken to protect the student's safety. The principal will invite parents/ guardians to discuss the supports that will be provided for their child.

7. Principals will notify the parent/guardian of students who **perpetrated engaged in** the bullying behaviours, and provide information about the **nature of the** activity that lead to the harm, the nature of the harm to the other student and the nature of any disciplinary measures taken in response to the activity. The principal will invite parents/guardians to discuss the supports that will be provided for their child.

8. A principal shall not notify a parent of a student if, in the opinion of the principal, doing so would put the student at risk of harm from a parent of the student, such that notification is not in the student's best interest. When principals have decided not to notify the parents that their child was involved in a serious student incident, they must document the rationale for this decision and notify both the teacher who reported the incident and the appropriate supervisory officer of this decision. Principals should also refer students to board resource staff who, if needed, can make referrals to community-based service providers that can provide the appropriate type of confidential support.

In circumstances where board employees have reason to believe that a student may be in need of protection, board employees must call a children's aid society according to the requirements of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act.

9. If dissatisfied with the supports in place by the principal in response to the complaint, parents are encouraged to contact the area superintendent. If the matter remains unresolved, parents may request that the superintendent inform and consult with the Associate Director or Director in order to reach a resolution.



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10. Consistent with progressive discipline approaches for correcting inappropriate behaviour, a principal shall consider suspension for a student who engages in bullying behaviours.

~~11. A student will be suspended pending possible expulsion for bullying behaviour if,~~ **Principals must suspend a student for bullying and consider referring that student for expulsion:**

- i. **Only if** ~~the pupil~~ **student** has previously been suspended for bullying, and the ~~pupil's~~ **student's** continuing presence in the school creates, **in the principal's opinion**, an ~~unreasonable~~ **unacceptable** risk to the safety of another person.
- ii. **If** ~~the~~ bullying was motivated by hate, prejudice or bias.

12. **Principals must also suspend a student, and consider referring that student for expulsion for any activity considered for suspension [subsection 306 (1) of the Education Act] if the activity is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or any other similar factor (e.g. socio-economic status, appearance).**

13. The principal will ensure resources, programs, intervention and other supports identified in the board bullying awareness and prevention plan are provided to students who have been bullied, students who have witnessed incidents of bullying (bystander) and students who have engaged in bullying behaviour to assist them in developing healthy relationships and practicing pro-social behaviours.

The programs, intervention and other supports will be provided by school-



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based employees of the board, and may be provided by external, third party providers as per the TCDSB Protocol. **For students with special education needs, interventions, supports, and consequences must be consistent with the students' strengths and needs, as well as with the program goals and learning expectations documented in their Individual Education Plan (IEP).**

14. The Board will provide annual professional development programs to educate teachers and other school staff about bullying prevention strategies for promoting a positive, **safe, welcoming, and inclusive** school climate.
15. Schools will provide opportunities for students to participate in bullying prevention and leadership initiatives within their own school.
16. The Board will identify safe reporting procedures in bullying awareness, prevention and intervention plans that allow students, parents, guardians and other persons to report incidents of bullying to staff of a school in a way that minimizes the possibility of reprisal and that ensures incidents of bullying are addressed in a timely, sensitive and supportive manner.
17. Principals will support students who want to establish and lead activities ~~and organizations~~ that promote a safe and inclusive learning environment, the acceptance of and respect for others and the creation of a positive school climate. These activities and organizations may promote gender equity, anti-racism, an understanding and respect for people with disabilities, or an understanding and respect for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. The activity ~~or organization~~ must promote a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all students, and must be consistent with Catholic social teachings and the expectations of the Code of Conduct.



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18. Anonymous surveys will be conducted at least once every two years to collect information from students, staff, parents/guardians in order to develop strategies and initiatives that promote a positive school climate and the prevention of bullying.

19. The TCDSB will proclaim the week beginning on the third Sunday in November ~~in~~ **of** each year as Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week.

Definitions:

Bullying

Aggressive and typically repeated behaviour (physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means) by a student where,

- a) the behaviour is intended by the student to have the effect of, or the student 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, and;

- b) the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the student 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.



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Cyber-bullying

This is a form of bullying that occurs through the use of technology, including the use of a computer, cellular phone or other electronic devices, using instant/text messaging, social networks, e-mail, websites or any other electronic **means** activities, and involves:

- a) creating a web page or 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.

Safe and Accepting School Teams

Each school must have in place a safe and accepting schools team responsible for fostering a safe, inclusive and accepting school climate. The team must include at least one parent, one teacher, one non-teaching staff member, one community partner, and the principal. The team should include at least one student. The Chairperson of this team must be a staff member.

At TCDSB, members of the safe and accepting school teams will have opportunities to meet, provide input into discussions, review data from the student surveys, and provide advice to the principal about school safety and Ministry of Education initiatives related to school climate and safety.

School Climate

The school climate may be defined as the learning environment and relationships found within a school and school community. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included, and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions.



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Evaluation and Metrics:

The effectiveness of the policy will be determined by measuring the following:

1. Annual Safe School Climate surveys administered to representative groups of TCDSB students.
2. Anonymous school climate surveys conducted with parents and staff at least every two years.
3. Analysis of Safe Schools Data **as reported in the Safe Schools Annual Report.** ~~Reporting Forms Part I, Progressive Discipline Incident Logs, Suspensions and Expulsions.~~