



POLICY NAME:	BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION
POLICY SECTION:	Schools, Students and Learning
DATE APPROVED:	January 23, 2008
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:	2029
DATES OF AMENDMENTS:	September 5, 2013; April 4, 2013; November 19, 2015; April 2, 2024
RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT:	Safe Schools

Policy:

Bullying, including cyberbullying, is a serious issue that adversely affects a student's well-being and ability to learn, adversely affects the school climate, including healthy relationships, and is not acceptable in the school environment (including virtual), in a school-related activity or in any other circumstances that will have an impact on the school climate.

This policy aims to provide students with a safe and supportive school climate, where school communities can respond to all forms of bullying, educate students on bullying prevention, promote healthy relationships, notice troubling changes in behaviour, address instances of bullying, and connect with students.

This policy addresses behaviours that occur at school, during school-related activities, on school buses, as well as behaviours that occur off school premises, outside schools hours, online, and in other circumstances where the behaviour will impact the school.

The policy is a requirement under Policy/Program Memorandum 144, Bullying Prevention and Intervention, is in alignment with the Toronto Catholic District School Board's (TCDSB) Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP), the Ontario Human Rights Code, and reflect Catholic values rooted in the love of Christ.

Scope and Responsibility:

The policy extends to all students of the TCDSB. It assigns specific duties to all employees of the Board to ensure compliance with the Education Act, the Human Rights Code, and all legislation listed and the TCDSB's Code of Conduct.

The Director of Education, the Superintendent of Safe Schools, and Principals are responsible for this policy.

Regulations:

1. Each TCDSB school will have a Safe and Accepting Schools Team. This Team will develop a local bullying awareness, prevention and intervention plan consistent with integrating local needs as part of its Safe Schools Plan and that strives to be representative of the diversity of the student population.
2. All Board employees must treat all allegations of bullying behaviour seriously. They must act in a timely, sensitive and supportive manner when responding to students or to parents, guardians and others who disclose or report bullying incidents.
3. TCDSB employees, bus drivers, third-party operators, and any individuals who are not employees of the board and come into direct contact with pupils on a regular basis will report to the Principal, as soon as reasonably possible, if they become aware of a bullying incident or learn of a student who may have engaged in bullying behaviour.
4. Bullying by students will be investigated and addressed promptly by the Principal, and supports will be provided to the student(s) harmed by the bullying behaviours, the individual(s) responsible for the bullying behaviours, and the witnesses and bystanders of the bullying behaviour.
5. When dealing with a bullying allegation, the Principal will communicate with parent(s)/guardian(s) and the employee(s) as outlined in the Procedural Guideline. Absent exceptional circumstances, Principals will contact parent(s)/guardian(s) regarding a bullying allegation by the end of the same day as the allegation is received.
6. The Principal will address incidents of bullying consistent with progressive discipline approaches for correcting inappropriate behaviour and taking into account any mitigating factors or other factors in the Education Act and Ontario Regulation 472/07.
7. When addressing bullying involving a student with special education needs, Principals will ensure that any interventions, supports and consequences for the student, are consistent with the student's strengths and needs, and with the program goals and learning expectations in the Individual Education Plan (IEP).

8. The Board will provide annual, culturally responsive professional development programs to educate teachers and other school staff about bullying prevention strategies that promote a positive school climate. Schools will provide opportunities for students and staff to participate in equity and inclusive education, bullying prevention and leadership initiatives within their own school. Bullying prevention includes learning to recognize the various forms of bullying (for example bullying based on race, or gender, or creed or other grounds) and understanding the actions that can be taken by those witnessing the behaviour.
9. The Board and Principals will identify and communicate safe reporting procedures in bullying awareness, prevention and intervention plans that allow students, parents, guardians, and others to report incidents of bullying to school staff in a way that minimizes the possibility of reprisal and that ensures incidents of bullying are addressed in a timely, sensitive, and supportive manner.
10. 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; the awareness and understanding of, and respect for people with disabilities; or awareness and understanding of, 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.
11. 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.
12. The Bullying Interventions and Prevention Policy, and associated procedural guideline will be communicated to all TCDSB staff, families, Catholic School Parent Councils, other parent/guardian groups, Advisory Committees, school bus operators and drivers.
13. The TCDSB will proclaim the week beginning on the third Sunday in November in each year as Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week.

Cross References:

Legislation

Education Act Part XIII, Behaviour, Discipline and Safety
O.Reg 472/07 Behaviour Discipline and Safety

O.Reg 440/20 Suspension of Elementary School
Ontario Human Rights Code
Child and Family Services Act, 2017
Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum

PPM 119, Developing and implementing equity and inclusive education policies in Ontario schools
PPM 128, The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct
PPM 144, Bullying Prevention and Intervention
PPM 145, Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour
PPM 149, Protocol for Partnerships with External Agencies for Provision of Services by Regulated Health Professionals, Regulated Social Services Professionals, and paraprofessionals

TCDSB Policy /Procedure

A.33 Guidelines for Trustees, Parents/Guardians and Staff in Addressing School Related Concerns
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. 01 Suspension and Expulsion Policy Operational Procedures – Section H: Principal Investigation Guidelines
S.S. 10 Progressive Discipline Policy
Police/School Board Protocol
TCDSB Anti-Sex Trafficking Protocol TCDSB Equity Action Plan
TCDSB Pastoral Plan
TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy
A.33 Guidelines for Trustees, Parents/Guardians and Staff in Addressing School Related Concerns
H.M. 24 Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education Policy
Policy/Program Memorandum 128, The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct
Policy/Program Memorandum 119, “Developing and implementing equity and inclusive education policies in Ontario schools,”
Program/Policy Memorandum 144, Bullying Prevention and Intervention
Program/Policy Memorandum 145, 2012 Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour
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
S.S. 01 Suspension and Expulsion Policy

S.S. 01 Suspension and Expulsion Policy Operational Procedures – Section H: Principal Investigation Guidelines
S.S. 09 Code of Conduct Policy
S.S. 10 Progressive Discipline Policy
Police/School Board Protocol
TCDSB Anti-Sex Trafficking Protocol TCDSB Equity Action Plan
TCDSB Pastoral Plan
TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy

Definitions:

Bullying

Section 1 (1) of the *Education Act* defines bullying as follows:

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.

For the purposes of the definition of bullying above, bullying behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic verbal or other means. The definition of bullying includes Cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying

Refers to bullying by electronic means as defined by s. 1 (1.0 0.2) of the Education Act, and includes:

A form of bullying that occurs through the use of technology or by electronic means, 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 activities. Cyber-bullying involves, but is not limited to any of the following:

- a. creating a web page, blog or social media presence 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 or sent digitally;
- c. inappropriate digital communication including posts online or on social media platforms;
- d. communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals;
- e. sending or sharing hateful, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating electronic communication or images via text messages, emails, direct messages;
- f. revealing information considered to be personal, private, and sensitive without consent;
- g. making and/or engaging, and/or participating in fake accounts on social networking sites to impersonate, humiliate and/or exclude others; and
- h. excluding or disrupting access to, a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts and during digital gaming sessions.

Reporting to the Principal

Individuals that report to the Principal must follow this policy. These “reports” include TCDSB employees, bus drivers, third-party operators, and individuals who are not employees of the board and come into direct contact with pupils on a regular basis (e.g. volunteers).

Positive School Climate

A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community respect each other and no members of the school community are discriminated against, contrary to the *Human Rights Code*, or as otherwise referenced in this Policy. All members of school communities will value and respect the teaching that all people are created in the image and likeness of God and have infinite dignity and worth.

Safe and Accepting Schools 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.

Evaluation and Metrics:

1. Safe School Climate surveys administered to representative groups of TCDSB students at least once every two years as per Ministry requirement.
2. Anonymous school climate surveys conducted with Parents/Guardians and Staff at least every two years.
3. Analysis and tracking of Safe Schools Data related to bullying incidents through Reporting Forms-Part I, Progressive Discipline Incident Logs, Suspensions and Expulsions, and Exclusions.