

## DIVISION-WIDE BULLYING PREVENTION

### Background

All students and staff have the right to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that includes the establishment of a Code of Conduct for students that addresses bullying behaviour. The Division takes seriously its responsibility pursuant to the Education Act to ensure that students are provided with a safe and caring environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours. The Division Office, Schools, and community have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance and acceptance.

Furthermore, the Division prohibits acts of harassment, bullying and violence. A safe and caring environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Bullying is conduct that disrupts a student's ability to learn and the school's ability to educate its students in a safe and caring learning environment.

The Division recognizes that bullying can affect students and or adults. It also recognizes that the perpetrators of bullying can also be students or adults, and as such, the principal must be prepared to take corrective action regardless of the age of the person being bullied or initiating the bullying.

### Definitions

*Bullying* means repeated and hostile or demeaning behaviour by an individual in the school community where the behaviour is intended to cause harm, fear or distress to one or more other individuals in the school community, including psychological harm or harm to an individual's reputation.

*Bullying intervention* is a comprehensive and effective response to the bullying incident that takes into consideration all parties involved in the bullying incident. It is to 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. The interventions are to be a part of the school's pyramid of intervention.

*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 effect on the lives of individual students and the school community.

*Bystander* is defined as an individual(s) who directly observes a bullying situation, and does not immediately remove themselves from the situation and or does not report the bullying to an appropriate person in authority.

*Cyber bullying* is intentional defamatory, harassing, threatening or intimidating communication directed toward another individual, including, but is not limited to email, telephone calls, text messaging, instant messaging, social networks, personal web sites, blogs, chat rooms and any other media or means capable of transmitting communication.

## Procedures

1. Students are responsible for conducting themselves in a manner that respects the rights of other students, school and Division staff and community members.
2. Bystander behaviours both active and passive can support bullying, and therefore are not acceptable behaviours of students.
3. Bullying that occurs outside of the school may affect the safe and caring learning environment within the school and the principal may take appropriate action to receive the complaint, investigate and respond with remedial and or disciplinary response.
4. Standards for student behaviour are to be set cooperatively with students, school staff, parents and school councils and reflect the intent of the Division's Administrative Procedure.
5. Principals will develop and implement procedures at the school level to promote positive pro-social student behaviour and implement procedures with appropriate consequences and remedial and or disciplinary responses for students who participate in acts of bullying.
  - 5.1 The principal will ensure that at the beginning of each school year teachers review their anti-bullying expectations with students.
  - 5.2 Reference to this Administrative Procedure or the school's procedures is to be placed in the School Handbook.
6. Using the school's pyramids of intervention (i.e. a framework of instructional interventions that can be provided in a learning environment to maximize student success), remedial and or disciplinary responses will be designed to correct the problem behaviour, prevent another occurrence of the behaviour, support the victim of the act of bullying, and support the student(s) who engage in inappropriate behaviour. The following factors are to be taken into consideration in developing and implementing appropriate consequences and remedial and or disciplinary responses:
  - 6.1 Factors for determining consequences:
    - 6.1.1 Age, maturity and individual circumstances of students involved;
    - 6.1.2 Severity of the behaviour;
    - 6.1.3 Previous incidences or continuing behaviours; and
    - 6.1.4 Others as deemed appropriate and identified in school procedures.
  - 6.2 Factors for determining remedial response:
    - 6.2.1 Personal;
      - 6.2.1.1 Life skill competency;
      - 6.2.1.2 Skills and strengths of the student;
      - 6.2.1.3 Talents of the student;
      - 6.2.1.4 Interests of the student;
      - 6.2.1.5 Participation in school activities; and
      - 6.2.1.6 Others as deemed appropriate and identified in school procedures.

6.2.2 Environmental

6.2.2.1 School culture and climate;

6.2.2.2 School, family and community supports available for student;

6.2.2.3 Home environment; and

6.2.2.4 Others as deemed appropriate and identified in school procedures.

7. Consequences and appropriate remedial and or disciplinary response for a student who commits acts of bullying may include positive behavioural supports and interventions or suspension, threat assessments and/or expulsion. In cases of severe bullying or repeated bullying of an individual, the principal may also involve the R.C.M.P.
8. In instances when an adult is reported for bullying activities, the principal will conduct an investigation. If the activities are deemed to be bullying activities the principal will follow-up with appropriate remedial or disciplinary response.
9. The principal is responsible for appropriately dealing with complaints of bullying and violations of this Administrative Procedure.
  - 9.1 All staff are responsible for reporting bullying to the principal and to address bullying activities to maintain a safe and respectful school climate.
  - 9.2 Students and parents are encouraged to report acts of bullying to school staff.
10. Reports of bullying may be made anonymously by students, but remedial and or disciplinary responses will not be assessed based solely on the anonymous response.
11. The principal is responsible for determining whether the reported act of bullying is a violation of this Administrative Procedure. In determining this, the principal will conduct a prompt, thorough and complete investigation of the reported incident.
12. The school will provide anti-bullying programs / messages and supports to students as deemed appropriate by the principal.

Reference: Sections 1, 31, 33, 35 Education Act  
Supporting Safe, Secure and Caring Educations in Alberta (1999)  
A Safe Place: Creating Peaceful Educations (1994)

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