

Toronto District School Board

Operational Procedure PR703

Title: **BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

Adopted: May 7, 2013

Revised: **September 6, 2022**

Reviewed: **September 6, 2022**

Authorization: Executive Council

1.0 RATIONALE

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention (“the Procedure”) affirms the Board’s commitment to bullying prevention and intervention within a broader system of actions in order to strengthen human rights and equity at the TDSB. This Procedure supports the implementation of the Caring and Safe Schools Policy (P051).

2.0 OBJECTIVE

To establish a framework to enable, support and maintain a positive school climate.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

Bullying, as per subsection 1(1) of the *Education Act*, refers to aggressive and typically repeated behaviour (through any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means) 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, and

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; (“intimidation”)

Bullying can occur in situations where there are real or perceived power imbalances between individuals or groups, and may be a symptom of racism, classism,

homophobia, sexism, religious discrimination, ethnic discrimination or other forms of bias and discrimination. Bullying can also be based on, but not limited to, body size, appearance, abilities, or other real or perceived factors. Perceptions about differences are often based on stereotypes perpetuated in broader society.

Bullying, including cyber-bullying, may be intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect. It can take many forms including physical (for example, pushing, tripping), verbal (for example, name calling, insults, threats, sexist/racist/transphobic comments), social, also known as relational (for example, spreading rumours, intentionally excluding others, humiliating others with public gestures) and causing harm to one's property.

Bullying, including cyber-bullying, may intersect with other forms of sexual exploitation including, but not limited to, sextortion and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. Traffickers and other sexual predators are increasingly using fake accounts to pose as acquaintances or friends of children and youth to lure, groom and recruit them into engaging in sexual acts or services. Children and youth who experience bullying are at increased risk for being sex trafficked.

Cyber-Bullying, as per subsection 1(1) of the *Education Act*, refers to bullying 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; 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.

Examples of cyber-bullying may include:

- a) sending or sharing hateful, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating electronic communication or images via text messages, emails, direct messages
- b) revealing information considered to be personal, private, and sensitive without consent
- c) making and/or engaging, and/or participating in fake accounts on social networking sites to impersonate, humiliate and/or exclude others
- d) excluding or disrupting access to, a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts and during digital gaming sessions
- e) Increasing the use of digital platforms enhances the threat of cyber-bullying as well as other safety risks.

Bullying prevention - 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 effects on the lives of individual students and the school community.

Bullying intervention - a comprehensive and effective response to the bullying incident that takes into consideration all parties involved in the bullying incident. It should 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.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITY

Executive Superintendent, Human Rights and Indigenous Education and Centrally Assigned Principal, Caring and Safe Schools and Alternative Programs.

5.0 APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This Procedure applies to all students and employees of the Board.

The Procedure also covers trustees, parents and guardians, occasional staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors.

6.0 PROCEDURES

6.1. Principles

- a) bullying adversely affects a student's well-being and ability to learn
- b) bullying adversely affects the school climate, including healthy relationships
- c) bullying, including cyber-bullying, is a serious issue 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

6.2. Practices

Schools will ensure that:

- (a) bullying will not be accepted on school property, at school-related activities, on school buses, or in any other circumstances where engaging in bullying will have a negative impact on the school climate;
- (b) policies and procedures on bullying prevention and intervention, and the definition of *bullying* will be communicated to students, parents, teachers and other school staff, school councils, volunteers and school bus operators/drivers; in a culturally responsive and relevant manner
- (c) they acknowledge that historical trauma is intergenerational trauma that is experienced by oppressed groups, especially racialized groups,

in particular, Indigenous and Black students and families that have and continue to be impacted by systemic oppression.

- (d) they acknowledge the significance of utilizing trauma-informed approaches and healing engagement strategies in support of all students and families
- (e) supports will be provided for students who have been bullied, students who have bullied others, and students who have been affected by observing bullying;
- (f) they have a Caring, Safe and Accepting Schools' team comprised of at least one student (where there is a student council in place), one parent/guardian/caregiver, one teacher, one support staff, one community partner, the principal, the school equity representative and the Positive Spaces representative. The chair of the team will be a staff member. Student mental health and well-being must be at the fore front of all Caring, Safe and Accepting School Teams. In addition, this Team will be responsible for, but not limited to, advising on the development and implementation of the School Code of Conduct, the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, the School Progressive Discipline Plan, as well as, the equity commitments and positive school climate programming that address identified gaps and supports the Multi-Year Strategic Plan;
- (g) the school develops and implements a school-wide bullying prevention, awareness and intervention plan as part of the School Improvement Plan. Components of the plan will include the following:
 - i. the definition of bullying, cyber bullying, cyber harassment, cyber defamation, cyber stalking;
 - ii. prevention strategies;
 - iii. intervention strategies;
 - iv. training strategies for members of the school community;
 - v. communication and outreach strategies;
 - vi. monitoring and review processes
 - vii. role of staff;
- (h) the awareness of equity and inclusivity, gender based violence prevention (e.g. positive spaces in schools), and mitigating and other factors on bullying prevention and intervention exists;
- (i) teaching strategies support a school-wide focus on developing healthy relationships by including bullying prevention and intervention in classroom teaching;
- (j) a comprehensive intervention strategy that addresses incidents of bullying, including appropriate and timely responses is developed;
- (k) students are able to report bullying incidents safely and in a way that will minimize the possibility of reprisal i.e., anonymously;

- (l) a review processes (e.g., Critical Path for creating a Positive School Climate) are established and communicated to all members of the school community in a culturally responsive and relevant manner to determine the effectiveness of the School Improvement Plan on bullying prevention and intervention.

7.0 EVALUATION

This Procedure is to be reviewed and updated as required but at a minimum every four (4) years.

8.0 APPENDICES

Not Applicable

9.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Policies

- Caring and Safe Schools (P051)
- Community Use of Board Facilities (P011)
- Equity (P037)
- Gender-Based Violence (P071)
- Human Rights (P031)

Operational Procedures

- Board Code of Conduct (PR585)
- Bully Prevention and Intervention (PR703)
- Non-Discretionary and Discretionary Student Transfers (PR540)
- Programs for Students on Long-Term Suspensions and Expulsions (PR586)
- Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour (PR702)
- Sexual Misconduct by Students (PR608)
- Police-School Board Protocol (PR698)
- Promoting a Positive School Climate (PR697)
- Reporting and Responding to Racism and Hate Incidents Involving or Impacting Students in Schools (PR728)

Other Documents

- Education Act, R.S.O 1990, Chapter E.2 as amended (particularly Part XIII)
- O. Reg 440/20, Suspension of Elementary School Pupils
- O. Reg 472/07, Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils
- O. Reg 612/00, School Councils
- Expected Practices for Understanding, Addressing and Preventing Discrimination

Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memoranda:

- PPM 120: Reporting Violent Incidents to the Ministry of Education
- PPM 128: The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Code of Conduct

- PPM 141: School Board Programs for Students on Long-Term Suspension
- PPM 142: School Board Programs for Expelled Students
- PPM 144: Bullying Prevention and Intervention
- PPM 145: Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour
- PPM 166: Keeping students safe - Policy framework for school board anti-sex trafficking protocols