

<b>Procedure Title</b>	<b>Bullying Prevention and Intervention</b>		
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<b>References</b>			
BP 6820-D "Safe and Accepting Schools" and AP 6820-D "Suspensions and Expulsions"; BP 7520-D and AP 7520-D "Human Rights"; BP 7522-D and AP 7522-D "Assault, Sexual Abuse and Professional Misconduct Involving Board Staff"; BP 6301-D "Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity"; Bill 157 "Keeping Our Kids Safe At School Act"; Policy/Program Memorandum No. 144 "Bullying Prevention and Intervention"; Education Act; Ontario Regulation 472/07; Bill 13 "Accepting Schools Act"			

**Procedure:**

**1.0 RATIONALE**

- 1.1 Bluewater District School Board is committed to the maintenance of a work and school environment that is free from any form of bullying. This commitment includes dealing promptly and effectively with any incidents of bullying to ensure that the policy on bullying is followed. The following procedure has been developed to assist in dealing with any incidents that may occur.
- 1.2 In cases of inappropriate behaviour involving students with special needs, interventions, supports, and consequences must be consistent with the student's strengths, needs, goals, and expectations that have been outlined in their Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- 1.3 Policy support and education are required in order to promote the elimination of bullying in our work and school environment. Building a culture of mutual support and respect in our school and work environments is key.

**2.0 DEFINITIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF BULLYING**

**Aggressive behaviour** may be intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect. It can take many forms, including:

- a) Physical (e.g., hitting, pushing, slapping, tripping);
- b) Verbal (e.g., name calling, mocking, insults, threats, and sexist, racist, homophobic, or transphobic comments; and
- c) Social, or relational (e.g., gossiping, spreading rumors, excluding others from groups, humiliation with public gestures or graffiti, shunning or ignoring). Social aggression may also occur through the use of technology (e.g., through the use of email, text messaging, social networking)

**Bullying** means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour 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 (including the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means) 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.

**Cyber-bullying** is 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 individuals or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.

**Harm** can be experienced in a number of ways, including physical, mental, emotional, and psychological

### Characteristics of Bullying

- a) Bullies may:
  - i. Abuse power either physically, psychologically, or sexually
  - ii. Taunt, name-call and put down
  - iii. Threaten and intimidate
  - iv. Exclude others purposefully
  - v. Use a variety of means to spread rumours
  - vi. Pick on the most vulnerable people
  - vii. Manifest different behaviours according to gender
- b) Bullying changes its form with age:
  - i. Younger children's playground bullying often involves pushing, shoving, name calling, teasing, and exclusion.
  - ii. Bullying may escalate to include ostracism, sexual harassment, date rape, gang attacks and cyber-bullying.
  - iii. Adult bullying may take the form of verbal abuse, control and manipulation and/or physical assaults, marital violence, child abuse, workplace harassment and senior abuse.

## 3.0 BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN

"Without question the most effective means of addressing bullying is through comprehensive, school wide programs." (Atlas & Pepler, 1998, Garrity et al., 1997; Skiba & Fontaninin, 2000)

- 3.1.1 The most important reason for developing a school wide bullying prevention and intervention plan is to engage and empower the silent majority, the students who are witnesses but don't yet know how to help.
- 3.1.2 The Bullying and Intervention Plan must be consistent with the policies and procedures of the board, and must be reviewed every two years.
- 3.1.3 When developing and reviewing the plan, boards must consult with:
  - a) students;
  - b) teachers;
  - c) principals;
  - d) other board staff;
  - e) volunteers;
  - f) parents;
  - g) school councils;
  - h) PIC;
  - i) members of the community;
  - j) Special Education Advisory Committee; and
  - k) community partners (e.g., social service agencies, mental health agencies, members of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, etc.)

**3.1.4 Intervention Program**

- a) The board will build on its early identification practices and procedures to help children at risk of being bullies and/or victims. As much as possible, this assistance must take place within the classroom and with the involvement of parents or guardians.
- b) Intervention programs as well as helping students to reduce their teasing, bullying, anger, or timidity, should attempt to discover and document the underlying cause(s) of the student's behaviour. As well as addressing, or helping students address, the cause(s), intervention should build on their strengths, enabling them to develop a healthy self-concept and appropriate interpersonal skills. Intervention programs must take into account the different learning needs of all students.
- c) The board will implement progressive discipline programs utilizing a continuum of interventions, supports and consequences, including opportunities to reinforce positive behaviour while assisting students to make appropriate choices. Progressive discipline programs will model a framework that shifts the focus from a purely punitive to a corrective and supportive model.
- d) Where appropriate, the board will develop and implement programming to address the special needs of exceptional students as identified through the Individual Education Plan process. Teachers, in consultation with parents, will be the primary resource for identifying these children and referring them to the appropriate person and/or agency. They will be aware that a certain amount of misbehaviour as a function for learning is normal for children, but abnormal misbehaviour would include the elements of high frequency, long duration and more serious intensity.
- e) Procedures must be developed in individual schools to ensure that teachers have the opportunity to consult with parents about the misbehaviour of their children. Where appropriate, an offer of available resources such as in-school counselling or a referral to a mental health agency must be made.
- f) The board will continue to develop partnerships with community organizations and agencies which can provide support to students in need.

3.1.5 The board's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, is to be made available to the public through the board's website. Each school must implement the board plan and also post the plan on school websites.

**4.0 SAFE AND ACCEPTING SCHOOL TEAMS**

Each school shall establish a Safe and Accepting Schools Team which will include the principal, and at least one student, one parent, one teacher, one non-teaching staff member, and one community partner. The chair must be a staff member. The team may also include, special education teachers, guidance counsellors, educational assistants, student services representatives, child and youth workers, members of the school council, police officers, bus drivers. This team will be responsible for fostering a safe, inclusive, and accepting school climate, and will:

- a) Review Bluewater District School Board Safe and Accepting Schools Policy (BP 6820-D);
- b) Review board Code of Conduct (AP 6820-D) and School Code of Conduct;
- c) Review Bluewater District School Board Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy (BP 6821-D);
- d) Review Bluewater District School Board Human Rights Policy (BP 7520-D);
- e) Assess the school's needs and goals through data collection and school climate survey;
- f) Provide in-service for teachers, administrators and other school staff;
- g) Identify resources for bullies, victims and families;
- h) Provide support for victimized students;
- i) Provide increased supervision where bullying tends to occur;
- j) Develop a system to track/monitor incidents of bullying (e.g. School Box);
- k) Integrate anti-bullying themes and activities into curriculum;
- l) Establish clear school-wide and classroom rules about bullying;
- m) Develop a cycle of on-going review, modification, and improvement of the school-wide bullying prevention and intervention plan and instructional programs.

**5.0 DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OF BULLYING**

Employees of the board must take seriously all allegations of bullying behaviour, or any behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on school climate, and act in a timely, sensitive, and supportive manner when responding to students who disclose or report bullying incidents. Step that should be taken include:

- a) Intervene immediately: stop the bullying behaviour as soon as you see it or become aware of it (see Appendix A);
- b) Talk to the bully, the victim and witnesses separately;
- c) Consult with other staff to get a wider reading on the problem;
- d) Assess the severity of the bullying and follow AP 6819-D "Safe and Accepting Schools Incident Reporting";
- e) Expect that the bully will minimize and deny his/her actions and accuse the victim;
- f) Refer to Bullying Prevention and Intervention policy/plan and School Code of Conduct during conferencing with bully and victim;
- g) Inform the bully of the consequences of his/her behaviour;
- h) Reassure the victim that all possible steps will be taken to prevent a reoccurrence and offer support;
- i) Inform parents/guardians of bully and of victim as soon as possible;
- j) Involve the parents/guardians in the resolution plan;
- k) Follow up communication as appropriate;
- l) Monitor the behaviour of the bully and the safety and well-being of the victim on a school-wide basis;
- m) Implement restorative measures.

**6.0 Suggestions for Intervention and Support****6.1 For Victim and Witnesses:**

- a) Develop the student's peer support network (buddy/peer system);
- b) Provide adult mentor;
- c) Develop social skills and self-esteem;
- d) Provide assertiveness training;
- e) Train victim to report any bullying;
- f) Offer counselling;
- g) Coach the victim or witness in ways to respond to a bully (e.g. Be Cool programme);
- h) Work with classmates and family of victim or witness;
- i) Provide a safe venue for reporting incidents;
- j) Hold class meetings;
- k) Provide school problem box;
- l) Stay calm, ignore, don't react and walk away;
- m) Stay in sight of peers and adults on school property;
- n) Provide print or other resources.

**6.2 For Bully:**

- a) Specific re-education in addition to consequences is recommended (e.g. anger management sessions, social skills courses, behaviour modification programs, programs designed to increase empathy and reduce aggressive behaviour);
- b) Letter of apology;
- c) Reading or reporting a Bullying Story;
- d) Role play (e.g., bully plays role of victim);
- e) School community service assigned by principal;
- f) Anger management training;
- g) Social skills training;
- h) Counselling;
- i) Request for intervention by outside agencies;
- j) In-school supervised time-out;
- k) Behaviour contract;
- l) Restitution;

- m) Alternative programming (e.g., SNAP, Behavioural Support Programme);
- n) Conflict resolution programme;
- o) Peer mentoring;
- p) Discussion re: behaviour expectations;
- q) Adults dealing with bullies should be calm but firm and avoid labelling;
- r) Remove bully from playground, event, activity, classroom;
- s) Help bully develop other forms of leadership and experience power in a pro-social way;
- t) Suspension;
- u) Expulsion hearing;
- v) Police intervention;
- w) Re-entry plan.

## **7.0 BUILDING A POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE AND BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION CULTURE**

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. Principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in the learning environment to support a positive school climate and a culture of mutual respect. A positive school climate is a crucial component of bullying prevention

### **7.1 The School Environment**

- 7.1.1 The school environment must be safe so that learning can take place. It is the obligation of all members of the school community to establish a safe and secure school environment. Character development is a foundation of our education system and it is an obligation of all members of the school community to focus on supporting and developing the whole student. When embedded in the school environment and the community, character development impacts on student success throughout their school years and beyond.
- 7.1.2 The school environment is both physical and social. It includes the school building, its surroundings, the people in it and the way they interact, the material resources, and the extensions of this environment that are necessary for the delivery of the program (e.g., field trips, school buses), extracurricular activities and the school climate. The school climate can be affected by student activities that occur both inside *and* outside of the school, and could include such things as internet harassment or cyber bullying or deliberate acts of violence against persons who are affiliated with the school environment.
- 7.1.3 To establish and maintain a safe and secure school environment:
- a) the school staff will teach by example, will design activities to provide a positive, inviting school atmosphere and will maintain a safe school culture for all people in Bluewater schools;
  - b) discipline strategies will be fair and non-violent and focus on teaching students about appropriate behaviours while maintaining their self-respect (discipline strategies may need to be individualized to meet student learning needs);
  - c) guidelines for supervision will be developed by individual schools to ensure the safety of staff and students at school-sponsored activities. These guidelines will be consistent with the school's Code of Conduct;
  - d) principals will deny entry to the school to a person found in possession of materials and/or substances deemed to be unsafe and/or inappropriate (e.g. hate literature, guns, knives, illegal drugs);
  - e) principals may deny entry to school-sponsored activities to individuals whom they know have a record of violence or who have been found in possession of weapons;
  - f) schools will establish procedures for dealing with visitors and/or strangers in the school;
  - g) principals will deny entry to individuals who, in the administrator's judgment, threaten, intimidate, harass, verbally abuse or attack any students or staff;
  - h) students with a record of violence or who have been found in possession of weapons and who wish to transfer from one school to another will be identified by principals. This information will be communicated to the appropriate supervisory officer and to the students so identified;

- i) principals will co-operate with bus operators to ensure that school buses, as extensions of the school environment, are safe and secure;
- j) schools will establish Safe School Committees; and
- k) schools will operate Health and Safety Committees.

## 7.2 Violence Prevention in the Curriculum

7.2.1 Violence prevention must be incorporated into all aspects of the curriculum for students from junior kindergarten to the end of secondary school. It is the joint responsibility of school, home and community to work together to guide students to become good citizens in a society that promotes an equitable, violence-free environment for all. The purpose of the Violence Prevention Curriculum is to promote identification and correction of circumstances which are contrary to safety and security.

7.2.2 Prevention is the establishment and use of activities designed to promote the building of healthy relationships and appropriate behaviours, such as:

- a) bullying prevention;
- b) citizenship development; and
- c) character development

7.2.3 The Prevention component is guided by the following principles:

- a) prevention is the most humane and efficient way to deal with violence, conflict, and acts of aggression;
- b) the board is committed to promoting appropriate methods of resolving conflict that are safe and respect the rights of others.

7.2.4 To achieve this there must be:

- a) early exposure to appropriate social skills to be used in different situations;
- b) early identification of forms of violence and reporting of threats to safety;
- c) early identification of problem behaviours and support for learning appropriate behaviours; and
- d) guided practice which will lead to the independent application of skills consistent with Bluewater's character attributes as a regular part of daily living and the ability to resolve conflict in a non-violent and non-hurtful way.

7.2.5 The Ontario Curriculum, specifically in Social Studies, Grades 1 to 6; History and Geography, Grades 7 and 8; Health and Physical Education, Grades 1 to 8; and Choices Into Action, Grades 1 to 12 includes expectations that relate to violence prevention and appropriate conduct.

These expectations include:

- a) understanding equity;
- b) understanding different cultures;
- c) developing a commitment to peace and justice;
- d) developing skills to get along with others (e.g. language skills related to negotiation and compromise);
- e) being a responsible citizen;
- f) respecting human rights; and
- g) building healthy relationships.

7.2.6 The curriculum must be free of bias, reflect the diverse groups that compose our society and provide opportunities for students to:

- a) understand how to be alert and prudent about personal safety;
- b) develop, practice, and reflect on interpersonal communication and problem-solving skills such as negotiation, mediation, management of conflicts, assertiveness, and the ability to cope with change or frustration;
- c) develop self-confidence and enhance self-esteem;
- d) acquire the ability to understand, respect, and care for others;
- e) develop awareness that discrimination is hurtful and unacceptable;
- f) acquire skills that will be useful in their existing and future relationships, such as parenting;

g) develop the ability to value the diversity of people and of points of view in society.

7.2.7 Physical education and school sports should provide opportunities for non-violent competitions and stress co-operation and positive attitudes.

### 7.3 Positive School Climate Strategies

7.3.1 Conducting school climate surveys– Each school must conduct anonymous school climate surveys of students, staff, and parents every two years. The surveys must include questions on bullying/ harassment related to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, as well as questions on sexual harassment. These surveys are voluntary, and parents may opt to not have their child participate.

7.3.2 Other methods of building a positive school climate could include:

- a) Reading lists and books that deal with bullying;
- b) Bullying Awareness Days;
- c) Co-operative activities;
- d) Class presentations (e.g. healthy relationships; bullying prevention);
- e) Workshops for students/staff/parents;
- f) Mentoring;
- g) Anti-bullying posters;
- h) Thought for the day;
- i) Media study;
- j) Study groups - student and/or staff;
- k) Anonymous report box;
- l) Guest speakers;
- m) Drama presentations;
- n) Positive Conflict Resolution Training;
- o) Bullying Prevention Programmes (e.g., Tribes, First Steps, Stop the Bullying, Bully Beware, Get Real About Violence, Second Steps, Virtues);
- p) Assemblies;
- q) Social campaigns;
- r) Identify areas in school or on grounds where students feel vulnerable and supervise appropriately;
- s) Presentations to school, staff, School Council, students;
- t) Teaching strategies that support school-wide bullying prevention and intervention policies;
- u) Comprehensive intervention strategy to address incidents of bullying, including appropriate and timely responses.

### 7.4 Staff Development

7.4.1 Bluewater District School Board will provide opportunities for all staff to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and maintain a welcoming and safe school environment.

7.4.2 Staff members must be able to adapt to new demands and circumstances. They must receive strong support, professional preparation and ongoing professional development focusing on the skills and knowledge that are required to teach appropriate conduct.

7.4.3 They must have opportunities to reflect, to learn and to collaborate with others.

7.4.4 Educators must be prepared for their role as teachers of appropriate interaction, violence prevention, and as facilitators of conflict resolution. They must also know how and when to call upon the support of others, within both the school and the community, including appropriate community agencies. Staff development is an essential component of the Safe and Accepting Schools, and the Bullying Prevention and Intervention policies and related procedures.

7.4.5 Board support staff, school administrators, and staff groups representing all staff will provide awareness/information opportunities for the purpose of applying school board and school procedures in a fair and consistent manner. Staff development topics include information about:

- a) school-based programs that address conflict resolution, mediation, self-esteem, decision-making;
- b) medical conditions that may be associated with violent behaviour;
- c) bullying prevention strategies that include expectations for appropriate student behaviour, teaching strategies that support the school-wide bullying prevention program and opportunities for all students to participate in bullying prevention training and leadership initiatives in their school
- d) community services that provide counselling, anger management, parenting skills, management of disturbed behaviour, etc.;
- e) signs/profiles of physical/sexual/emotional abuse and appropriate interventions, such as reporting of an incident;
- f) programs that focus upon identification and elimination of bias and discrimination on the basis of race, culture, religion, gender, language, disability, sexual orientation, or other attributes such as income or appearance;
- g) programs supporting the safety and welfare of victims;
- h) programs and procedures for re-integrating perpetrators.

**APPENDIX A**  
**HOW TO HANDLE HARASSMENT**  
**IN THE HALLWAYS IN THREE MINUTES**  
*(From the Toronto District School Board)*

**1. STOP the harassment.**

- Interrupt the comment/halt the physical harassment.
- DO NOT pull students aside for confidentiality unless absolutely necessary.
- Make sure all the students in the area hear your comments.
- *It is important that all students, whether onlookers, potential targets, or potential harassers, get the message that students are safe and protected in this school.*

**2. IDENTIFY the harassment.**

- Label the form of harassment: “You just made a harassing comment/put-down based upon race (religion, ethnicity, abilities, gender, age, sexual orientation, economic status, size, etc.).”
- Do not imply that the victim is a member of that identifiable group.
- A major goal is to take the “spotlight” off the target and turn the focus to the behaviour. Students should realize what was said, regardless of what was meant (e.g., kidding).

**3. BROADEN the response.**

- Do not personalize your response at this stage: “At this school we do not harass people.” “Our community does not appreciate hateful/thoughtless behaviour.”
- Re-identify the offensive behaviour: “This name calling can also be hurtful to others who overhear it.”
- “We don’t do put-downs at this school” specifically includes those listening, as well as the school community in general. Even if they were “only kidding”, harassers must realize the possible ramifications of their actions.

**4. ASK for change in future behaviour.**

- Personalize the response: “Chris, please pause and think before you act.”
- Check in with the victim at this time: “If this continues, please tell me, and I will take further action. We want everyone to be safe at this school.”
- Now turn the “spotlight” on the harasser specifically, asking for accountability. Again, be sure not to treat the target like a helpless victim. Rather, plainly give him/her this responsibility on behalf of others.