

**POLICY**

SECTION:	EDUCATIONAL SERVICES	POLICY:	<b>G-29</b>
TOPIC:	<b>SAFE AND ACCEPTING SCHOOLS: BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION</b>	PAGE:	Page 1 of 3
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REVIEW	June 2020	REVISED:	

**Rationale**

The District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) recognizes that providing students with an opportunity to learn and develop in a safe and respectful society is a shared responsibility in which school boards and schools play an important role. A safe, inclusive and accepting learning environment that promotes healthy relationships and behaviours is essential for student success and well-being. To reach their full potential, children and youth must feel safe, included, and engaged in school. A whole school approach in an inclusive social climate based on caring and respectful relationships among and between students, teachers, other school staff, parents/guardians and School Administrators is a necessary supporting condition for learning. Bullying adversely affects a school's ability to educate its students, students' ability to learn, healthy relationships and the school climate. Expectations of appropriate student behaviour are set out in the Education Act, Ont. Reg. 298 and Board's Policy G-08: Code of Student Behaviour.

**Policy**

The DSBN recognizes that:

- Bullying adversely affects a student's ability to learn.
- Bullying adversely affects the school climate, including healthy relationships.
- Bullying will not be accepted on school property, at school-related activities, on school buses, or in any other circumstances (e.g., online) where engaging in bullying will have a negative impact on the school climate.

**Definitions (as per PPM 144: Bullying Prevention and Intervention and Bill 13 – Creating Safe and Accepting Schools)****Bullying**

"Bullying" means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour 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.

Bullying behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, social, electronic, written or other means.

The definition of "bullying" includes bullying by electronic means, commonly known as "cyber-bullying", 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.
- c) communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.

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**Positive School Climate**

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 the prevention of inappropriate behaviour.

**Prevention and Awareness Raising Strategies**

The DSBN recognizes that focusing on prevention is critical and should be an ongoing effort. Fostering a positive learning and teaching environment that supports academic achievement and well-being for all students will help reduce the potential for incidents of discrimination, harassment and bullying.

**Intervention and Support Strategies**

Intervention requires appropriate and timely responses and should be done in ways that are consistent with a progressive discipline approach and may include early and/or ongoing intervention strategies. Interventions and supports will be evidence-informed, timely and take a whole school approach.

Progressive discipline may also include a range of interventions, supports and consequences when bullying behaviour has occurred, with a focus on improving behaviour.

For a student with special education needs, interventions, supports, and consequences must be considered with the student's strengths, needs, goals, and expectations contained in his or her Individual Education Plan (IEP).

**Reporting Bullying Behaviour**

DSBN employees who work directly with students – including School Administrators, teachers, and other school staff – must respond to any student behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate. Such inappropriate behaviour may include bullying. DSBN employees take all allegations of bullying behaviour seriously and will act in a timely, sensitive, and supportive manner when responding to students who disclose or report bullying incidents.

Schools will establish procedures to allow students to report bullying incidents safely and in a way that will minimize the possibility of reprisal.

**Reporting to School Administrators**

The purpose of reporting incidents of inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour is to ensure that the School Administrator(s) is aware of any activities taking place in the school for which suspension or expulsion may occur and to help ensure a positive school climate. Reports to the School Administrator(s) are to be made no later than the end of the day.

**Professional Development Strategies for School Administrators, Teachers, and Other School Staff**

The DSBN will provide annual professional development programs to educate teachers and other school staff about bullying prevention and strategies for promoting a positive school climate.

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**Communication and Outreach Strategies**

To support a whole-school approach, the DSBN will make every effort to actively communicate their policies and procedures on bullying prevention and intervention to School Administrators, students, parents/guardians, teachers and other school staff, their Special Education Advisory Committee, school councils, and school bus operators and drivers.

**Monitoring and Review**

The DSBN will conduct a cyclical review of the policy and procedure.

**School Level Plans**

Schools are required to develop and implement school-wide bullying prevention and intervention plans as part of their School Improvement Plan. Results of school climate surveys will inform the development of the bullying prevention and intervention plan, including the selection strategies, practices, programs, etc. Components of these plans must be consistent with the policies and procedures of the DSBN and must include:

1. The definition of bullying.
2. Completion of the DSBN school climate survey (completed at least every two (2) years).
3. Analysis and strategy implementation based on the DSBN school climate survey to include:
  - Prevention
  - Intervention and support strategies
  - Procedures to allow students to report bullying incidents safely
  - Staff procedures for reporting bullying incidents

**SAFE AND ACCEPTING SCHOOLS TEAMS (SAST)**

Each school must have in place, a safe and accepting schools team responsible for fostering a safe, inclusive, and accepting school climate that should include at least one student and must include at least one parent/guardian, one teacher, one non-teaching staff member, one community partner, and the School Administrator(s). An existing school committee (e.g., the healthy schools committee) can assume this role. The chair of this team must be a staff member.

**References**

Policy E-11: Equity and Inclusive Education Policy  
Policy G-02: Safe Schools  
Policy G-08: Code of Student Behaviour  
Policy G-28: Student Discipline  
Administrative Procedure 3-01: Safe Schools Plan  
Administrative Procedure 3-26: Student Discipline