| BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE |
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| ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE |
| **401 Bullying Prevention and Intervention** |
| DIRECTIONAL POLICY |
| **Safe, Inclusive & Progressive Schools** |

CATHOLIC DISTRICT
SCHOOL BOARD OF
EASTERN ONTARIO
www.cdsbeo.on.ca

## Title of Administrative Procedure:

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

## Date Approved:

September 2022

## Projected Review Date:

September 2027

## Directional Policy Alignment:

This procedure aligns with the potential Safe, Inclusive, & Progressive Schools Policy by promoting a welcoming, safe, equitable and inclusive environment while in compliance with Policy/Program Memorandum 144: Bullying Prevention and Intervention.

## Alignment with Multi-Year Strategic Plan:

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Procedure supports the Board's Mission to cultivate the heart, mind, body, and soul. This procedure aligns with the Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan supporting the four tenets of believing, protecting, learning, and nurturing.

CDSBEO Strategic Plan 2020-2025

# Purpose

The Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario is committed to the principles of equity and inclusive education and to providing all students with the knowledge, skills and values needed to live a meaningful and faith-filled life. The Board is committed to making each of its schools a caring and safe place for learning. It does so in the context of the Catholic community which roots its mission in the partnership of home, school, and parish. A positive school climate is a crucial component of bullying prevention and is achieved through a whole-school approach.

## Administrative Procedure

It is the policy of the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario to use bullying prevention and intervention strategies to foster a positive school climate. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable, and accepted and where all students are encouraged to be leaders and to reach their academic potential.

Based on Gospel values, such as the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (Wisdom, Understanding, Right Judgement, Courage, Knowledge, Reverence, and Wonder and Awe for all Individuals) and the teachings of the Church, a Catholic school community is one where all members accept responsibility to help or get help for one another.

## Policy Statement

Bullying adversely affects a student's well-being and ability to learn, as well as the school climate, including healthy relationships. 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.

## Principles

- Bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour. It can be physical, verbal, or social. It may also occur through electronic means known as cyber-bullying. Bullying, including cyber-bullying, may be intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect.

- A safe and positive learning environment is essential for student success. Bullying impedes the development of a positive school climate. A whole-school approach involving all education and community members is required to prevent bullying.

- The impact of bullying can be severe, and has the potential to negatively affect students' learning, attendance, safety/sense of safety, sense of self-worth and overall mental health and well-being. Bullying can create a negative environment at school or school-related activities for an individual, group, or the whole school.

- The effectiveness of a school involves more than students' achievement of academic success; it involves the development of relationships among staff, among students, and between staff and students to promote a safe environment and positive school climate.

- Bullying shall not be accepted on school property, at school-related activities, on school buses, or in any other circumstance (e.g., online) where engaging in bullying will have a negative impact on the school climate.

- The Board will ensure that for students with special education needs, interventions, supports and consequences are consistent with the child's strengths and needs, as well as with the program goals and learning expectations documented in their Individual Education Plan (IEP). Ongoing intervention and support may be necessary to promote and sustain positive student outcomes.

- Bullying is included on the list of infractions which result in suspension.

- Bullying prevention programs with intervention strategies will be an integral part of the program at all schools within the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario. Proactive intervention coupled with coaching and support can help all students develop the skills and understanding needed to build and maintain positive relationships.

- 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. The Board's Anti-Sex Trafficking protocol can be accessed on the Board website.

- **Bullying Prevention** is a whole school approach that, rooted in evidence-informed decisions, 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.

- **Bullying Intervention** is a comprehensive response to the bullying incident that takes into consideration all parties involved in the bullying incident. Within the context of the Catholic community, support is provided for the student who is bullied, intervention for the student who has bullied and response strategies for students who actively and passively encourage bullying and all students negatively impacted by bullying.

- **Positive school climate** is the sum-total of all the personal relationships within the school and is a critical component of bullying prevention. A positive school climate is built upon each member accepting responsibility for the others and includes the participation of parents and the broader community.

## Action Required

1) The Board shall support and ensure that all schools will have in place a comprehensive **prevention strategy** that includes expectations for appropriate student behaviour and supports school-based implementation.

2)   Under the direction of the principal, schools will implement teaching and learning strategies that support school-wide bullying prevention policies. Developing skills for healthy relationships by including bullying prevention strategies and highlighting equity and inclusive education principles in daily classroom instruction and school activities including the Religious Education and Family Life programs.

3)   The Board will support and ensure that all schools will implement a comprehensive **intervention strategy** to address incidents of bullying, including appropriate and timely responses and training for staff on how to intervene in a bullying situation including what to do, when to seek assistance and from whom.

4)   Schools will use a whole-school approach involving community partners, including Board support staff and parents/guardians as well as parish, police and community agency support in the implementation of their intervention strategies.

5)   The Board will put in place procedures to allow students and others to **report bullying incidents** safely and without fear of reprisal. These procedures will define the responsibilities and roles of the principals, teachers, support staff, parents and students, particularly when the student is a bystander to bullying, and will be communicated to parents on an annual basis.

6)   The Board will ensure that each school has a **tracking mechanism** in place so that if one student is involved in several recurring incidents, that information will be readily available.

7)   Anti-bullying intervention will follow the guidelines of **progressive discipline**. Serious student incidents must be reported to the principal so that appropriate actions to address the incident and protect the student may be taken. When the principal has determined that an act of bullying has occurred, the principal must suspend the student and consider referring that student for expulsion if both of the following conditions are met: (1) the student has previously been suspended for bullying, and (2) the student's continuing presence in the school creates, in the principal's opinion, an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person.

8)   The Board will ensure the alignment of policies relation to suspensions and expulsions with Ontario Regulation 440/20: Suspension of Elementary School Pupils.

9)   For students in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3, bullying incidents should be addressed with the appropriate positive behaviour supports in the school setting. The principal may only suspend a student in Junior Kindergarten to grade 3, under section 310 of the Education Act, for engaging in bullying if they have conducted an investigation

respecting the allegations.

10) Under the Education Act, principals must suspend a student between grades 4 to 12 for bullying and, after an investigation, consider referring that student for expulsion if:

   a. the student has previously been suspended for bullying; and the student's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person,

   b. the bullying is motivated by bias, prejudice, or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other similar factor.

11) The Board will provide **support for students** who have been bullied, witnessed incidents of bullying, or engaged in bullying.

   a. may be provided by social workers, psychologists, community members (such as elders) or other professionals who have training in similar fields, as determined by the Board (such as, child and youth counsellors)

   b. may be provided by school-based employees of the board, through board programs and resource personnel, or through community-based service providers

   c. will be curriculum-linked, consistent with a bias-free progressive discipline approach

   d. provided from a range of resources – from early prevention to more intensive interventions in cases of persistent bullying, with possible referral to community-based service providers.

12) **Where incidents of bullying are observed or reported,** the school administration and staff will collaborate with parents to provide the student with the educational and personal supports necessary for the student to re-engage positively in the learning program and the Catholic school community. These supports may include inclusion programs, peer tutoring, counseling, self-regulation/anger management, self-confidence development, or other school support mechanisms as appropriate.

13) The whole-school approach ensures that the Board will support **training strategies** for all members of the school community on bullying prevention and intervention, including training on cultural sensitivity, respect for diversity and special education needs. As well as developing skills for healthy relationships by including bullying prevention strategies and highlighting equity and inclusive education principles in daily classroom instruction and school activities. All members of the school community need to take responsibility for the behaviour of all students. The Board

recognizes the ongoing need to support training for any new members of the school community.

    i.    Opportunities will be made available for students and staff to learn to recognize the various forms of bullying (such as racial bullying, or bullying based on religion) and understand the actions that can be taken by those witnessing the behaviour.

    ii.    Opportunities will be made available for students and staff to participate in equity and inclusive education, bullying prevention, and leadership initiatives within their own school.

14) The Board's **Safe Schools Resources and Administration Manual** will support the implementation of bullying prevention and anti-bullying intervention.

15) The Board will develop a culturally relevant and accessible **communication and outreach strategy** taking into account linguistic, ethnocultural and accessibility considerations to help ensure parents have access to the board bullying prevention and intervention policy and plan. This strategy will highlight the Board's policies and procedures on bullying prevention and intervention, as well as the definition of bullying, to students, parents, teachers and other school staff, Catholic School Councils, volunteers, and school bus operators/drivers. The roles and responsibilities of all members of the school (e.g., principals, teachers, support staff, students, parents) will be clearly articulated. This information will also be provided to the Catholic School Council, Parent Involvement Committee, Special Education Advisory Committee, Equity Steering Committees and other appropriate community partners.

16) The Board communication strategy will help to ensure parents have access to the board bullying prevention and intervention policy and plan including:

    i.    information on who to contact if parents have questions or concerns

    ii.    how parents can access more information about bullying prevention and reporting

    iii.    a clear path for parents to follow should they need to report bullying including; where a parent can file a report and with whom, what steps will be taken following a report made by a parent, and a process a parent can follow if they are not satisfied with the school's response.

17) The Board will **provide information to parents** on how to recognize signs that their child may be being bullied and who to contact at school if they believe their child to be a victim. Ongoing processes will be established to meaningfully engage parents so that they feel heard and are valued partners in their children's education.

18) The Board will establish a **monitoring and review process** to determine the effectiveness of its bullying prevention and intervention policies and procedures and should include an analysis of the school climate through an anonymous survey of students, parents, and staff members. Performance indicators will be used for monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating the effectiveness of the Board's bullying prevention and intervention policies, as well as assessing how well parents understand their roles and responsibilities with respect to policies and practices related to bullying prevention.

19) At least once every two years the Board will conduct anonymous school climate surveys of students, staff, and parents. Practices will be adjusted as necessary to address any barriers that might prevent parents from understanding their roles and responsibilities. Every effort to provide access to appropriate Board resources/publications for parents will be made.

20) Following a serious incident, the principal must notify parents of the involved students, except in certain circumstances, and must invite the parents to discuss supports for their child. Bullying, including cyber-bullying, is an instance of a serious student incident.

21) If an incident is violent, the Board will follow the direction in the Provincial Model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol (2015) regarding notification of the police.

22) The Board will collect and analyze data on the nature of violent incidents to support the development of board policies and to inform board and school improvement plans.

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

24) A curriculum-linked culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy training strategy will be put in place on bullying prevention and intervention to provide administrators, teachers, and other school staff the resources and support they need to disrupt and dismantle systemic barriers and to address all forms of bullying. Resources will be made available to other adults who have significant contact with students (for example, school bus operators, drives, volunteers).

25) The Board will develop a bullying **prevention and intervention plan** that schools will implement and include as part of their **School Improvement Plan.** The plan will be posted on the Board and school websites**.** This plan will be reviewed at least every two years.

26) The Board will require each school to have in place a **Safe and Accepting Schools Team** responsible for school safety that is composed of at least one student (where appropriate),one parent, one teacher, one support staff member, one community partner in addition to the principal. The Safe Schools team will be chaired by a staff member.

27) All schools will implement the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (as developed by the Board by soliciting the views of the whole school community) and post the plan onthe school website.

## Responsibilities

**The Board of Trustees is responsible for:**
- Review of this procedure as part of its regular policy and procedure review cycle.

**The Director of Education is responsible for:**
- Providing leadership and designating resources to ensure implementation and compliance with this administrative procedure.

**Superintendents of Schools and System Portfolios are responsible for:**
- Support Principals with the implementation and compliance with the requirements under this procedure.
- Ensuring the climate survey is conducted every two years.
- Ensuring annual professional development regarding bullying prevention and intervention is provided.
- Supporting schools to implement the bullying prevention and intervention plan to promote a safe and inclusive learning environment.

**Principals and Vice-Principals are responsible for:**
- Ensuring the implementation of this procedure in the school environment.
- Ensuring the procedure is communicated to the school community and posted on the school website.
- Establishing a Safe and Accepting Schools Team to develop a school-wide approach to bullying prevention and intervention and to review school climate results.
- Addressing and responding to incidents of bullying in accordance with this procedure.
- Providing interventions and other supports for students who have been bullied, engaged in bullying or witnessed incidents of bullying.

**Staff are responsible for:**
- Ensuring they are knowledgeable about the requirements outlined in this procedure.

- Reporting and responding to any incidents of bullying.
- Participating in annual professional development to support this procedure.
- Members of the Safe and Accepting Schools Team are responsible for reviewing school climate survey results to build strategies into their school improvement plans.

**Students are responsible for:**
- Abiding by the standards of behaviour outlined in this protocol and the Safe, Inclusive, and Progressive Schools policy.
- Reporting incidents of bullying to school staff.
- Providing input through school climate surveys.

**Parents are responsible for:**
- Being informed about this procedure.
- Reporting incidents of bullying to school staff.
- Familiarizing themselves with the definition of bullying.

**Progress Indicators:**
- The climate survey is completed every two years and the results are shared with members of the school community.

## Definitions

- **Bullying** is behaviour that can be repeated or occur one time and can be carried out by an individual or group of individuals. Bullying can occur in situations where there are real or perceived power imbalances between individuals or groups, and may be a symptom of:
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    i.   racism, classism, homophobia, sexism, religious discrimination, bullying can also be based on, but not limited to;
    ii.  body size, appearance, age, disability or the receipt of special education, or other real or perceived factors.

  Bullying means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a pupil where 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 an individual.

- **Cyber-Bullying** is the act of engaging in bullying behaviours through electronic means such as social media platforms, email, text or direct messaging, digital gaming and/or communication applications. Examples of cyber-bullying may include:

  o  sending or sharing hateful, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating electronic communication or images via text messages, emails, direct messages,
  o  revealing information considered to be personal, private, and sensitive without consent,
  o  making and/or engaging, and/or participating in fake accounts on social networking sites to impersonate, humiliate, and/or exclude others,
  o  excluding or disrupting access to, a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts and during digital gaming sessions.

- A **Whole-School Approach,** which involves all members of the school community, is also important in supporting efforts to ensure that schools are safe, inclusive and accepting. It is an effective approach to making systemic changes that will benefit all students and the broader community. Implementation of a whole-school approach needs to occur at all levels – the board, school, class, individual, family, and community.

## References

- Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum: 144 [Bullying Prevention and Intervention](#) (2021)
- Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum: 145 [Progressive discipline and promoting positive student behaviour](#) (2018)
- [Education Act](#), R.S.O. (199), O. Reg. 440/20
- CDSBEO Code of Conduct, [Health and Safety Policy](#)