

**TITLE: ALLEGED HARASSMENT/ABUSE OF A STUDENT BY A STUDENT**

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**1.0 OBJECTIVE**

To set out procedures for dealing with alleged harassment/abuse of a student by another student or students.

**2.0 DEFINITIONS**

In this procedure,

- 2.1 For purposes of this policy and procedures, harassment is defined as engaging in offensive behaviour or conduct against another person that is known, or ought reasonably to be known, to be unwelcome, including, but not limited to, by reason of one's position of authority or because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, gender, sexual orientation, age, record of offences, marital status, family status, or disability. Harassment may be:
- a) sexual, including advances, requests for sexual favours, or other conduct of a sexual nature including personally offensive behaviour, comments and/or gestures which might reasonably be expected to cause insecurity, discomfort, offence or humiliation to another person or group, when submission to such conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a condition of employment or as a basis for any employment decision, or has the purpose or effect of interfering with a person's learning or work environment;
  - b) racial and ethnocultural, including overtly or covertly ridiculing, degrading or expressing hatred, whether verbally, in writing or physically, based on race, ethnic origin, skin colour, language, dress, citizenship, or religion;
  - c) homophobic, including discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation; and/or
  - d) personal, including offensive, embarrassing or harmful references to an individual's intellectual or physical capacities or appearance or family status;
- 2.2 Harassment may take the following forms:
- a) verbal, including offensive words or jokes which demean persons on the basis of any form of discrimination, bullying, or intimidation;

- b) environmental, including graffiti, defacement of private or public property including school lockers, pictures or cartoons that are demeaning of others based on any of the above forms of discrimination;
- c) physical, including unwelcome physical contact or assault, offensive gestures, threatening physical behaviour, physical bullying;
- d) psychological, including deliberate isolation or ostracism, condescending or patronizing behaviour which undermines self-respect.

2.3 For purposes of this procedure, abuse means a condition, on the part of a complainant, of physical harm, sexual molestation, exploitation or assault, and/or emotional harm, including but not limited to verbal or psychological abuse which causes emotional harm.

### 3.0 RESPONSIBILITY

3.1 The school principal and Superintendent of Schools.

### 4.0 PROCEDURES

4.1 Initial Steps by Student: A student who feels he/she is being harassed/abused by a student or students may:

- a) confide in another student, who should offer support and may encourage further action as outlined below;
- b) confide in a member of a peer support group where schools have such programs, for example, peer outreach, peer mediation, peer helpers, or conflict resolution. The student receiving the information is expected to provide support and contact an appropriate staff member;
- c) confide in a teacher or other staff member who will offer support and inform the principal or vice-principal;
- d) confide in the principal or vice-principal, who will offer support and intervene to ensure the harassment/abuse ceases if shown to have occurred; or
- e) confide in a parent/guardian. It is expected that the parent/guardian will contact the school principal/vice-principal.

4.2 Action required: If a student has allegedly been subjected to harassment/abuse by another student while on Board property, defined as including school buildings, grounds and facilities under the jurisdiction of the Board and also including school buses, field trips or other school-sponsored events including co-operative education placements, and it is reported, the principal has the responsibility to administer appropriate progressive disciplinary measures on the student committing the harassment/abuse.

- a) Upon receipt of a complaint, the appropriate principal or vice-principal of the alleged harasser/abuser will follow up by:
  - (i) interviewing the complainant and preparing detailed notes of the incident to file;
  - (ii) interviewing the alleged harasser and preparing detailed notes to file;

(iii) interviewing any witnesses and preparing detailed notes to file.

**Note:** It is mandatory to inform parents/guardians of a student who is under 18 years of age, whether the student is the complainant or the alleged harasser/abuser.

- b) As harassment/abuse can be physically and emotionally harmful to the recipient, after investigation, and when the principal is assured that harassment/ abuse did occur, progressive disciplinary measures will include one or more of the following:
- (i) oral reprimand;
  - (ii) written reprimand;
  - (iii) counselling;
  - (iv) suspension (see Board Policy P.026.SCO: Student Suspension and Expulsion and Board Procedure PR.515.SCO: Student Suspension);
  - (v) recommendation for expulsion (see Board Policy P.026.SCO: Student Suspension and Expulsion and Board Procedure PR.515.SCO: Student Suspension, Investigation, and Possible Expulsion).
- c) The principal will ensure that support will be provided for students who have been bullied, students who have bullied others, bystanders and others who may have been affected by observing harassment/abuse.

4.3 If the principal believes after preliminary investigation that a critical incident has occurred (see Board Procedures PR.533.SCO: Police Involvement in Schools and PR.528.SCO: Critical Incident Review Process), the appropriate procedures for reporting a critical incident and for involving Police Services will be followed.

4.4 It is the duty of every principal to ensure that all students are regularly informed of the Board's policy with respect to harassment/abuse, that they are aware that a Hotline exists, and that they have access to information and the procedures to follow if they are harassed/abused.

4.5 It is the duty of every principal to ensure that victims of abuse and harassment are specifically informed of the support services available to them through student services at the school and the Board, victim's assistance services of the Ottawa Police Service, and other services offered within the community.

## 5.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

*The Education Act and Regulations*

Protocol to Accompany Safe Schools Policies in the City of Ottawa, Ottawa-Carleton Safe Schools Committee, 1998

Board Policy P.032.SCO: Safe Schools

Board Policy P.026.SCO: Student Suspension and Expulsion

Board Procedure PR.515.SCO: Student Suspension, Investigation, and Possible Expulsion

Board Procedure PR.533.SCO: Police Involvement in Schools

Board Procedure PR.528.SCO: Critical Incident Review Process

