

TITLE: SAFE SCHOOLS

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1.0 OBJECTIVE

To ensure that students, staff, parents/guardians and visitors are safe and welcome at an orderly learning environment, free from concerns about personal safety.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

In this policy,

- 2.1 **Activities off school premises** mean activities which have occurred off school property that the principal believes could have an impact on the school climate.
- 2.2 **Authorized person** means a person empowered to act as an occupier at the schools to which they are assigned for the purposes of enforcing the *Trespass to Property Act*, 1990. The following are authorized persons:
- a) Supervisory Officers
 - b) Principals
 - c) Vice-Principals
 - d) Program Administrators
 - e) Teachers
 - f) Plant Supervisors
 - g) Custodians
 - h) Any person in authority, in the circumstances
- 2.3 **Board** means the Board of Trustees.

- 2.4 **Board property** includes school buildings, grounds and facilities under the jurisdiction of the Board. This policy applies not only to conduct on Board property but also includes, for example, conduct on school buses, during field trips or at school-sponsored events off school premises.
- 2.5 **Bullying** is a form of repeated, persistent, and aggressive behaviour directed at an individual or individuals that is intended to cause (or should be known to cause) fear and distress and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, or reputation. Bullying occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance.

Students may attain or maintain power over others in the school through real or perceived differences. Some areas of difference may include size, strength, age, intelligence, economic status, social status, solidarity of peer group, religion, ethnicity, disability, need for special education, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, and race.

Bullying is a dynamic of unhealthy interaction that can take many forms. It can be physical (e.g., hitting, pushing, tripping), verbal (e.g., name calling, mocking, or making sexist, racist, or homophobic comments), or social (e.g., excluding others from a group, spreading gossip or rumours). Bullying may also occur through the use of technology (see Cyber Bullying).

- 2.6 **Cyber Bullying** means sending or posting harmful or malicious messages or images through e-mail, instant messages, cell phones and websites and other technology.
- 2.7 **Discrimination** is intentional or unintentional differential treatment for which there is no bona fide or reasonable justification. Prohibited grounds of discrimination are: age, race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political beliefs, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation.
- 2.8 **District** means Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.
- 2.9 **Guardian** is interpreted to mean a person, other than a parent, who has lawful custody of a child, as established by court order.
- 2.10 **Progressive discipline** means a whole-school approach that utilizes a continuum of interventions, supports, and consequences to address inappropriate student behaviour and to build upon strategies that promote positive behaviours. When inappropriate behaviour occurs, disciplinary measure should be applied within a framework that shifts the focus from one that is solely punitive to one that is both corrective and supportive.

The continuum of intervention may include written work assignment with a learning component, withdrawal of privileges, withdrawal from class, detention, restitution for damages, conflict resolution, individual, peer and group mediation, volunteer service to the school community, referral to counselling, short term suspension, long term suspension, expulsion.

- 2.11 **School-authorized activity** means any activity which is clearly connected to a school or its program, has been authorized by the principal or designate, and includes, for example, athletic events, field trips, playground activities, school-sponsored events off school premises, and travel on school buses.

- 2.12 **School/Board premises** includes the school and Board buildings and all adjacent Board property which is attached to the school or Board building, including playgrounds, parking lots, garden areas and bus bays, as well as school buses when being used to transport students on a school-authorized activity.
- 2.13 **Trespassing** carries the definition used in the *Trespass to Property Act 1990*.

3.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 The Board believes that it is the right of each student and staff member to a safe environment where every student can reach their full potential.
- 3.2 Schools play an important role in providing students with an opportunity to learn and develop in a safe and respectful society.
- 3.3 The Board endeavors to teach self-control, self-respect, self-discipline and respect for others and for property to help prepare every young person for a satisfying and productive adult life.
- 3.4 The Board encourages positive student behaviour while at the same time supports providing positive, constructive and progressive measures to prevent inappropriate behaviours from escalating and to maintain an orderly, cooperative learning atmosphere in all schools.
- 3.5 The Board supports the use of practices that take into account the needs of individual students by showing sensitivity to diversity, to cultural needs and to special education needs, when implementing bullying prevention and intervention programs.
- 3.6 The Board does not tolerate physical, verbal (oral or written), sexual or psychological abuse; bullying or harassment; discrimination on the basis of race, ethnic origin, creed, culture, religion, gender, gender identity, language, disability, sexual orientation or any other attribute.
- 3.7 The Board believes that bullying is a serious issue that has far reaching consequences for both the entire school community and the community at large as it:
- a) adversely affects students' ability to learn and function as well-adjusted individuals;
 - b) adversely affects healthy relationships and the school climate;
 - c) adversely affects a school's ability to educate its students; and
 - d) can have long-term effects on individuals.
- 3.8 The Board believes that children who suffer prolonged victimization through bullying, as well as children who use power and aggression as bullies, may experience a range of psycho-social problems that may extend into adolescence and adulthood.

- 3.9 The Board does not tolerate the presence of intruders on any of its property or at school-sponsored events, and will expect its agents to take appropriate action, including the possible laying of charges against those who refuse to co-operate, in accordance with sections 4.17 to 4.21 of this policy.

4.0 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES

- 4.1 All safe school policies and procedures of the Board shall conform to the Provincial Code of Conduct and the School District Code of Conduct.
- 4.2 All participants in OCDSB schools - students, parents or guardians, volunteers, employees - are governed by this policy whether they are on school or Board property, on school buses, participating in school-authorized events or activities off school premises.
- 4.3 The Board expects high standards of respect, civility and responsible citizenship from all members of the OCDSB and its school communities at all times.
- 4.4 Behavioural expectations and the consequences of inappropriate behaviour should be clearly enunciated in a positive manner to everyone in the school community.
- 4.5 The District shall provide direction to schools to ensure accountability, excellence, and opportunities for learning in a safe environment, under the leadership of our principals and the support of teachers and school staff.
- 4.6 The Board shall promote the long-term prevention of violence by:
- a) promoting programs that focus on building of healthy relations, character development and good citizenship, which will help students manage their lives and relationships in non-violent ways;
 - b) encouraging schools to use conflict resolution, restorative justice programs and other preventive programs (e.g. programs to deter theft and vandalism on Board property) and intervention measures to develop positive attitudes and acceptable behaviour; and
 - c) providing opportunities for students to develop the skills necessary to handle and avert violent and potentially violent situations.
- 4.7 Principals shall review at least annually school safety and school climate with the school council.

Bullying

- 4.8 Bullying will not be accepted on school property, at school-related activities, on school buses, or in any other circumstances (e.g. online and activities off school premises)
- 4.9 The Board shall reduce and try to eliminate the incidence of bullying and violence in the schools.
- 4.10 The Board shall provide bullying prevention and intervention programs consistent with a progressive discipline approach in all schools in the District.

- 4.11 Each school shall develop and implement a school-wide bullying prevention and intervention plan.
- 4.12 Each school's prevention and intervention plan shall include:
- a) appropriate and timely responses to address incidents of bullying; and
 - b) strategies and support for students who have been bullied, students who bullied others, bystanders, and others who have been affected by observing bullying.
- 4.13 Each school shall have in place procedures to allow staff, occasional teachers, students, parents/guardians and volunteers to report bullying incidents safely and in a way that will minimize the possibility of reprisal.
- 4.14 Each school shall establish a safe 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, and the principal or designate. The team must have a staff chair.
- 4.15 In developing and implementing bullying prevention and intervention in schools, principals shall consult Board Procedure PR.659.SCO Bullying Prevention and Intervention.

Access to Board Premises

- 4.17 Persons who are on school/Board premises without being authorized by *Ontario Regulation 474/00 Access to School Premises*, or in violation of any of its provisions, have committed an offence and can be prosecuted under the *Education Act* (s.305) and/or the *Trespass to Property Act 1990*.
- 4.18 Subject to subsections 4.19 to 4.21, the following persons shall be permitted to be on school/Board premises:
- a) a person enrolled as a pupil in the school;
 - b) a parent or guardian of such a pupil;
 - c) a person employed or retained by the Board who is on the premises for performing the duties assigned by the Board;
 - d) a person who is generally invited by a staff member to attend an event on school/Board premises for the purposes of that event;
 - e) a person whose presence is authorized by the principal or designate;
 - f) a person who is otherwise on the premises for a lawful purpose, such as a person registered for a continuing education program, a person attending an event for which the premises have been contracted, a person making a lawful delivery, a person attending a school council meeting, a person making a legitimate enquiry of the school, or a person using school grounds in a manner for which they were intended, for that purpose only; and

- g) a member of the Board, a member of the Assembly (MPP) in whose constituency the school is located, or a member of the clergy in the area where the member has pastoral charge.
- 4.19 The permission granted in subsection 4.18 applies only for the purposes described in sub-section 4.18, and does not entitle access to all areas of the school/Board premises.
- 4.20 The Board and its agents have the right to lock the school/Board premises when they are not being used for a purpose authorized by the Board. Under normal circumstances, the decision to lock school grounds will be the responsibility of the principal, vice-principal, or designate.
- 4.21 No person shall be permitted to remain on school/Board premises if, in the judgement of an authorized person, the person's presence is potentially detrimental to the safety or well-being of a person or property on the premises, or interferes with the conduct of school activities.
- 4.22 Where an unauthorized person refuses to report their presence, staff shall act in accordance with Board Procedure PR.524.SCO Access to School/Board Premises.

Weapons

- 4.23 The Board is seriously concerned about issues of assault, threat and intimidation and thus it strictly prohibits weapons on school and other Board property, at Board-sponsored events, and activities off school premises.
- 4.24 Anyone on Board property or attending a Board-sponsored event shall not supply, handle, use, transmit or have in their possession a weapon.
- 4.25 In situations where weapons are involved, staff shall act in accordance with Board Procedure PR.525.SCO Weapons.

Progressive Discipline Practices

- 4.26 The Board requires the use of intervention strategies to foster safe and appropriate student behaviour in schools and school-related activities.
- 4.27 Disciplinary practices shall be fair and consistent to address student behaviours that are contrary to the provincial and OCDSB Codes of Conduct, with the basic assumptions underlying a democratic society.
- 4.28 The range of interventions, supports and consequences used in schools shall be clear and developmentally appropriate and shall include learning opportunities for students in order to reinforce positive behaviours and help students make good choices.
- 4.29 For students with special education needs, the interventions, supports and consequences shall be consistent with the expectations in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- 4.30 The Board and school administrators shall consider all mitigating and other factors, as required by the *Education Act* and as set out in *Regulation 472/07: Suspension and Expulsion of Students*.

- 4.31 Each school shall develop a school policy and procedure on progressive discipline and the promotion of positive student behaviour.
- 4.32 The school policy shall focus on ensuring that a positive climate built on healthy relationships, character development, social inclusion, and good citizenship will prevail in the school community.
- 4.33 The school policy shall take into account the needs of individual students and will show sensitivity to diversity, cultural needs and special education needs of students.
- 4.34 The school policy on progressive discipline shall outline a continuum of interventions, supports, consequences and strategies, in accordance with Board Procedure PR.660.SCO: Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour.

Partnerships

- 4.35 Ongoing communication, consultation and co-operation among schools, students, parents, staff and community are critical to maintaining a safe and effective learning environment and promoting positive student behaviour.
- 4.36 The Board and schools shall work cooperatively and in shared responsibility with students, parents, school councils, staff, and the wider community to foster a safe and inclusive school environment and to fulfill the guiding principles and objectives of the Board.
- 4.37 The Board expects parents to support the efforts of school and District staff in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.
- 4.38 The Board shall establish protocols with community agencies to support prevention and intervention programs.
- 4.39 All District staff shall cooperate with police services in ensuring that schools are and continue to be safe and orderly learning environments.

Communications

- 4.40 The District shall provide training to all administrators, teachers, occasional teachers and all support staff to support the implementation of this policy. The District shall ensure that others (e.g., school bus drivers, school bus operators, support staff, parents, members of community agencies, and volunteers) are made aware of the policy.
- 4.41 Subject to legislation governing disclosure of personal information, as appropriate and on an ongoing basis, trustees and school council chairs shall be made aware of major violent events that have occurred.
- 4.42 The Director of Education shall ensure that there are appropriate responses to critical incidents and that critical incidents are reported to the police and to the Ministry of Education, and shall report annually to the Board, in accordance with PR.528.SCO Critical Incident Review Process. The summary reports to the Board shall be made public after removing any identification of individual students.

- 4.43 The Director of Education/Secretary of the Board is authorized to issue such procedures, guidelines and other materials as may be necessary to implement this policy.

5.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The Education Act

Education Amendment Act (Progressive Discipline and School Safety), 2007

Trespass to Property Act, R. S. O. 1990, Chapter T.21

Ontario Regulation 298 (as amended)

Ontario Regulation 472/07 Suspension and Expulsion of Students

Ontario Regulation 474/00, Access to School Premises

MOE Code of Conduct, 2007

Policy/Program Memorandum 128, the Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct, October 17, 2018

Policy/Program Memorandum 141, School Board Programs for Students on Long-Term Suspension, December 5, 2012

Policy/Program Memorandum 142, School Board Programs for Expelled Students, December 5, 2012

Policy/Program Memorandum 144, Bullying Prevention and Intervention, October 17, 2018

Policy/Program Memorandum 145, Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour, October 17, 2018

Protocol to Accompany Safe Schools Policies in the City of Ottawa, 2016

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

Board Policy P.034.SCO: Substance Abuse

Board Policy P.041.SCO: Custody and Access to Students by Parents/Guardians

Board Policy P.043.SCO: Police Involvement in Schools

Board Policy P.060.FIN: Vandalism, Theft, Damage or Loss Affecting Board Property

Board Policy P.125.SCO: School District Code of Conduct

Board Procedure PR.515.SCO: Student Suspension and Expulsion

Board Procedure PR.521.SCO: Safe Schools

Board Procedure PR.522.FIN: Vandalism, Theft, Damage or Loss Affecting Board Property

Board Procedure PR.523.SCO: Substance Abuse

Board Procedure PR.524.SCO: Access to School/Board Premises

Board Procedure PR.525.SCO: Weapons

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

Board Procedure PR.531.SCO: Custody and Access to Students by Parents/Guardians

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

Board Procedure PR.543.HR: Alleged Harassment of a Student

Board Procedure PR.659.SCO: Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Board Procedure PR.660.SCO: Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour