



Limestone District School Board is committed to building and sustaining a positive school climate for all students enrolled in the Board's schools in order to provide to our students the opportunity to reach their full potential. To that end, the Board has implemented programs and activities that focus on bullying prevention and intervention.

Providing students an opportunity to learn and develop in a safe and respectful environment is a shared responsibility in which the board and schools play an important role. Bullying prevention and intervention strategies contribute to a positive learning and teaching environment that supports academic achievement for all students and that helps students reach their full potential.

Research demonstrates that bullying is a serious issue that has far-reaching consequences for individuals, their families and peers, and the community at large. A clearly articulated school-wide bullying prevention plan is the foundation of an effective bullying prevention program.

1. General

- 1.1. Bullying adversely affects a student's well-being and ability to learn.
- 1.2. Bullying adversely affects healthy relationships and the school climate.
- 1.3. Bullying adversely affects a school's ability to educate its students.
- 1.4. 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.
- 1.5. Bullying will not be accepted from any member of the school community, including adults in the school community, as well as students.



2. Definition of Bullying

- 2.1. As defined by the Education Act, “Bullying” means aggressive and typically repeated behavior by a pupil where, (a) the behavior is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behavior 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 (“intimidation”).
- 2.2. For the purposes of the definition of “bullying” above, behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.
- 2.3. Cyber-bullying: For the purposes of the definition of “bullying” above, 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; and (c) communicating material electronically to one or more individuals or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.
- 2.4. Bullying is a dynamic of unhealthy relationship 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, transphobic, or homophobic comments), or social (e.g., excluding others from a group, spreading gossip or rumours, or writing graffiti). It may also occur through the use of technology (e.g., spreading rumours, images, or hurtful comments through the use of e-mail, cell phones, text messaging, Internet websites, social networking sites or other technology).



- 2.5. Students 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. Prevention Strategies

3.1. Positive School Climate

A positive school climate is a crucial component of prevention; it may be defined as the sum total of all of the personal relationships within a school. 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. When relationships are founded in mutual acceptance and inclusion, and modeled by all, a culture of respect becomes the norm. A positive school climate is a crucial component of bullying prevention and requires evidence-informed solutions. A positive school climate exists when:

- a whole-school approach is utilized involving all education and community partners;
- all members of the school community feel safe, and are safe, comfortable, included, and accepted;
- all members of the school community demonstrate respect, fairness, and kindness in their interactions, building healthy relationships that are free from discrimination and harassment;
- healthy inclusive relationships are promoted;
- students are encouraged, and given support, to be positive leaders and role models in their school community;
- open and ongoing dialogue takes place between the principal, staff members,



parents, and students;

- all partners are actively and positively engaged;
- the learning environment, instructional materials, and teaching and assessment strategies reflect the diversity of all learners;
- bullying prevention and awareness-raising strategies for students and staff are reinforced through programs addressing discrimination based on such factors as age, race, sexual orientation, gender, faith, disability, ethnicity, and socio-economic disadvantage;
- bullying prevention and awareness-raising strategies for students and staff are reinforced through curriculum-linked programs;
- every student is inspired and given support to succeed in an environment of high expectations;
- improvement of learning outcomes for all students is emphasized.

3.1.1. All schools are expected to support and continuously strive to maintain a positive school climate in their schools.

3.1.2. All schools will develop programs which actively promote and support positive behaviours that reflect character development initiatives, in consultation with and under the direction of the board's administration.

3.1.3. All schools will recognize and organize activities for Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week which will occur every year during the week beginning on the third Sunday in November. This week will be used to promote awareness and understanding of bullying and its consequences in the school community.

3.2. Positive School Climate and Bullying

Given the importance of addressing bullying, which can have a significant impact on student safety, learning, and the school climate, bullying is one of the activities for



which suspension must be considered.

3.2.1. Principals must suspend a student for bullying and consider recommending the student for expulsion if (a) the student has previously been suspended for bullying, and (b) the student's continuing presence in the school creates, in the principal's opinion, an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person. When both of these conditions are met, the principal must suspend the student and consider referring the student for an expulsion hearing.

3.2.2. Principals must also suspend a student, and consider recommending the student for expulsion, for any incident under subsection 306(1) of the Education Act, including bullying, that 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 (e.g., socio-economic status, appearance).

3.3. Teaching Strategies

Teaching strategies will be used that focus on developing healthy relationships by including bullying prevention in daily classroom teaching (e.g., reading books that deal with bullying; character education.) This will include training on cultural sensitivity, respect for diversity, promotion of equity and inclusion, and special needs.

3.3.1. During a school day, there are many "teachable moments" when issues appear to arise. Prompt intervention with coaching and support, can help all students to develop skills and understanding that they need to maintain positive relationships with others. Such interactions that students have with their teachers, other school staff, and fellow students, as well as with principals, vice-principals, their parents, and others, can be used to help improve their social skills.



3.4. Code of Conduct

All members of the school will become familiar with and demonstrate understanding of the Board's Code of Conduct which sets out expected standards of behaviour.

3.5. Training

3.5.1. Bullying prevention and intervention training will be provided for the Board's staff and students. Principals and school councils are encouraged to provide programs for parents on bullying prevention and intervention.

3.5.2. Students will be provided with opportunities to participate in bullying prevention training and positive leadership initiatives within their own school.

4. Intervention and Support Strategies

4.1. A comprehensive intervention strategy to address incidents of bullying, including appropriate and timely responses, will be used by schools.

4.2. Intervention and support should be consistent with a progressive discipline approach. Strategies could range from early interventions to more intensive interventions in cases of persistent bullying, with possible referral to community members (such as elders) or social service agencies. Ongoing intervention and support may be necessary to sustain and promote positive student behaviour.

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

4.4. Disclosure Process

4.4.1. Each school shall put into place a disclosure process (e.g., Let's Talk, Let's Listen) whereby any student can bring an incident of bullying to the attention of the principal, vice-principal, the student's teacher, a guidance counsellor or



other staff member, whether the student was the victim or the observer.

- 4.4.2. Students must be protected against reprisals and must feel comfortable in disclosing incidents of bullying in such a way that will minimize the possibility of reprisal.
- 4.4.3. All employees of the board will take seriously all allegations of bullying behaviour and act in a timely, sensitive and supportive manner when responding to students who disclose or report bullying incidents.
- 4.4.4. Schools must provide support for students who have been bullied, students who have bullied others and students who have been affected by observing bullying. Parents of students that have been victimized and parents of those students who have engaged in any behaviour for which the student could be suspended or expelled and that resulted in harm to another pupil, must be invited to have a discussion with the principal about the supports that will be provided for their child.
- 4.4.5. Schools will develop a plan to protect and support victims.
- 4.4.6. If a parent/guardian of a student who is a victim is dissatisfied with the plan put in place by the school, the parent/guardian should first discuss the concerns with the principal of the school. If the parent/guardian is still dissatisfied, the parent/guardian may contact the supervisor of the school.
- 4.4.7. Board employees who work directly with students, including administrators, teachers, and non-teaching staff (including PSSP staff), must respond to any student behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate. Such behaviour includes all inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour at any time at school and at any school-related event if, in the employee's opinion, it is safe to respond to it. Such inappropriate behaviour may involve bullying.

5. Responding to Incidents

- 5.1. The purpose of responding to incidents of inappropriate and disrespectful



behaviour is to stop and correct it immediately so that the students involved can learn that it is unacceptable. Behaviour that is not addressed becomes accepted behaviour.

- 5.2. Board employees who work directly with students – including administrators, teachers, educational assistants and other non-teaching staff such as PSSP staff – must respond to any student behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate.
- 5.3. Such behaviour includes all inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour at any time at school and at any school-related event if, in the employee's opinion, it is safe to respond to it.
- 5.4. Such inappropriate behaviour may involve bullying and other behaviours for which a principal must consider suspension and/or expulsion.
- 5.5. Responding may include asking a student to stop the inappropriate behaviour; naming the type of behaviour and explaining why it is inappropriate and/or disrespectful; and asking the student to correct the behaviour (e.g., to apologize for a hurtful comment and/or to rephrase a comment) and to promise not to do it again.
- 5.6. By responding in this way, inappropriate student behaviour that may have a negative impact on the school climate is immediately addressed.
- 5.7. When an incident involves a student with special needs, Board employees are expected to respond in an appropriate way.
- 5.8. Board employees are not required to respond to incidents when, in their opinion, responding would cause immediate physical harm to themselves or to a student or another person. However, for incidents for which a suspension or expulsion must be considered, board employees must report these to the principal and confirm their report in writing using the Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part I.
- 5.9. For other incidents, where suspension or expulsion would not be considered but



board employees feel it is not safe to respond, they will be expected to inform the principal verbally as soon as possible. For example, a board employee would not be required to respond if it would mean having to leave a student with special education needs who would be in danger if left alone.

- 5.10. When considering suspension or expulsion for bullying incidents, principals shall be guided by AP 358 Student Suspensions, Education Act, ss 306-308 Suspension, and O. Reg. 440/20 Suspension of Elementary School Pupils.

6. Reporting to the Principal

- 6.1. The purpose of reporting incidents of inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour is to ensure that the principal is aware of any activities taking place in the school for which suspension or expulsion must be considered.
- 6.2. An employee of the board who becomes aware that a student at a school of the board may have engaged in an activity for which suspension or expulsion must be considered shall report the matter to the principal as soon as reasonably possible.
- 6.3. In reporting, the employee must consider the safety of others and the urgency of the situation in reporting the incident, but, in any case, must report it to the principal no later than the end of the school day.
- 6.4. In cases where an immediate action is required, a verbal report to the principal may be made. A written report must be made when it is safe to do so.
- 6.5. All employee reports made to the principal must be confirmed in writing, using the "Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part I". Activities for which a student may be suspended or expelled are specified on this form in accordance with Administrative Procedures 357, 358 and 359.
- 6.5.1. Where the principal or vice-principal is the sole witness to an incident, the administrator is similarly required to use the reporting form to confirm in writing what he or she witnessed.



- 6.6. The principal must provide the person who submitted the report with written acknowledgement of receipt using the “Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part II”.
- 6.7. A principal shall investigate any matter reported under section 6.5.0. Each report will be assigned a report number.
- 6.7.1. After investigating a matter reported under section 6.5.0, the principal shall communicate the results of the investigation to the teacher, if a teacher made the report. If the matter was reported by an employee who is not a teacher, the principal shall communicate the results of the investigation to the employee, unless, in the principal’s opinion, it would not be appropriate to do so. Communication between the principal and school staff about the investigation and the results of the investigation is a shared responsibility.
- 6.7.2. The principal or vice-principal must not disclose more personal information than is reasonably necessary for the purpose of communicating the results of the investigation. This information must be provided in a timely manner so that school staff can work with to best meet the needs of students, support a positive school climate, and help prevent future inappropriate behaviour from taking place.
- 6.8. If the principal or vice-principal has decided that action must be taken as a result of any incident within the progressive discipline continuum, he/she will file a copy of the reporting form with documentation indicating the action taken in the Ontario Student Record (OSR) of the student whose behaviour was inappropriate. The names of all other students that appear on the form, both aggressors and victims, must be removed from the form before it is filed in the OSR of the student whose behaviour was inappropriate.
- 6.9. Where the principal or vice-principal has taken action in the case of more than one student, a copy of the reporting form and documentation indicating the action taken must be filed in the OSR of each student whose behaviour was inappropriate. The names of all other students that appear on the form, both aggressors and



victims, must be removed from the form before it is filed in the OSR of the student whose behaviour was inappropriate.

6.10. In the case of the victim, no information about the incident must be placed in his/her OSR, unless the victim or parent/guardian of the victim expressly requests that it be place in the OSR.

6.11. In situations where the victim is also an aggressor and the principal has taken some action short of suspension, information about the incident must not be placed in this student's OSR if the principal has decided not to notify this student's parents. However, if the principal has notified this student's parents, information regarding the incident and the action taken will be placed in the OSR.

6.12. The form and documentation must be kept in the OSR for a minimum of one year.

6.13. In all cases, the principal must provide the employee who reported the incident with written acknowledgement of receipt of the report, using the "Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part II" and must specify whether the Investigation is completed or in progress. If the Investigation is completed, the Principal will identify who the information will be shared with. If the Investigation is in progress, the Principal will once again identify who the information will be shared with. and identify Information that could identify the student(s) involved must not be part of the acknowledgement.

6.14. If no further action is taken by the principal, the principal is not required to retain the report and should destroy it.

6.15. In addition to all employees of the board, school bus drivers must also report such incidents in writing to the principal of the school. Bus driver reporting requirements will be included in transportation contracts and procedures.

7. Training Strategies

7.1. The Board will provide training strategies on bullying prevention and intervention for administrators, teachers, and non-teaching staff.



- 7.2. Training may be available for other adults who have significant contact with students such as bus drivers, yard/lunch supervisors and volunteers.
- 7.3. The training will include curriculum-linked, culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy training strategies for responding to gender-based and homophobic bullying that is consistent with equity training on cultural sensitivity, on respect for diversity, and on special education needs in order 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. .

8. Communication and Outreach Strategies

- 8.1. Procedures on bullying prevention and intervention will be communicated to students, parents, teachers and other school staff, the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), Indigenous Education Council, school councils, Parent Involvement Committee, Equity Steering Committee, school bus operators and drivers, and other appropriate community partners.
- 8.2. Roles and responsibilities of all members of the school (e.g. principals, vice-principals, teachers, student, and parents) will be clearly articulated and understood.
- 8.3. The board will provide access to appropriate supports for parents and opportunities to support teachers in addressing bullying issues.
- 8.4. To support parental and family engagement, 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 including:
 - information on who to contact if parents have questions or concerns
 - how parents can access more information about bullying prevention and reporting



- 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
- a process a parent can follow if they are not satisfied with the school's response.

9. Board and School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plans

9.1. The board will establish a bullying prevention and intervention plan for the schools of the board based on the Ministry template/model.

9.1.1. The board plan will be based on consultation with students, teachers, principals, and other staff of the board, volunteers working in schools, parents, school councils, and community partners. Once established, the board plan will be posted on the board website and on school websites.

9.1.2. The board plan will be reviewed once every two years and will be based on further consultation with those identified in 9.1.1.

9.1.3. Schools will revise their existing school-wide bullying prevention and intervention plans as part of their School Improvement Plans. These school plans must be based on the board bullying prevention and intervention plan.

9.2. Components of the board plan will include the following:

- Policy Statements: (a) bullying adversely affects a student's ability to learn; (b) bullying adversely affects the school climate, including healthy relationships; (c) 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.



- The definition of bullying
- Prevention and awareness-raising strategies including (a) expectations for appropriate student behaviour; (b) teaching strategies that support a school-wide bullying prevention plan that focus on developing skills for healthy relationships, and the principles of equity and inclusion throughout the curriculum in daily classroom instruction and school activities; and (c) provide opportunities for all students to participate in equity and inclusive education, bullying prevention, and leadership initiatives within their own school.
- Intervention and support strategies, including (a) support plans to protect victims; (b) supports for students who have witnessed incidents of bullying; (c) supports for students who have engaged in bullying; (d) appropriate, sensitive, supportive, and timely responses based on consistent use of progressive discipline; and (e) the use of curriculum-linked supports.
- Reporting requirements (as outline in 4.0.0 to 6.0.0 above) for all board staff, and mechanisms for students to report incidents safely and in a way that will minimize the possibility of reprisal.
- Notification of Parents (as outlined in AP 353)
- Training strategies for members of the school community including (a) annual professional development programs to educate teachers and other school staff about bullying prevention and strategies for promoting a positive school climate; (b) curriculum-linked training strategies on bullying prevention and intervention; (c) strategies for teachers and other staff to respond to bullying; and (d) training for new teachers.
- Communication and outreach strategies
- Monitoring and review processes



10. SAFE SCHOOLS TEAMS

- 10.1. Each school will have a safe schools team responsible for school safety that is composed of at least one student (where appropriate), and must include at least one parent, one teacher, one non-teaching staff member, one community partner, and the principal.
- 10.2. An existing school committee (such as a Healthy Schools Committee) can assume this role.
- 10.3. The chair of this committee will be a staff member.

11. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 11.1. Performance indicators for monitoring, review and evaluation of this administrative procedure will be developed in consultation with teachers, non-teaching staff, students, parents, school councils, School Council Liaison, and the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).



Legal References:

P/PM 144 Bullying Prevention and Intervention, January 2022

*P/PM 128 the Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct
Education Act Part XIII*

Administrative Procedures 103, 353, 357, 358, 359

P/PM 145 Progressive discipline and promoting positive student behaviour

*P/PM 119 Developing and implementing equity and inclusive education policies in Ontario
schools*

P/PM 120 Reporting violent incidents to the Ministry of Education