

Student Bullying

Background

The division is committed to providing a safe, caring and respectful learning environment for all students. Student success is best attained in an environment that is free from bullying type behaviours. The division has policies and procedures that are designed to reduce and eliminate bullying behaviours as well as procedures and processes to address bullying.

The division believes that bullying is a serious problem that adversely affects the learning success and well-being of children and youth.

Bullying in any form will not be tolerated.

Definition

Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior that is repeatedly directed at an individual or group from a position of relative power. Bullying behavior can take many forms. It can be physical (e.g., hitting, pushing, tripping), verbal (e.g., name calling, insults, put-downs), social (e.g., social isolation, gossip) or cyber (e.g., threats, insults, harmful messages spread through the internet or communication technologies such as, but not limited to e-mail, cel phone, text messages, websites, blogs, etc.). Bullying can be direct, “in your face” confrontation, or indirect “behind your back”, such as spreading rumours. Bullying can be done by one person or by a group. A student being bullied feels helpless in trying to stop it.

A student is bullied or harassed when he or she is intentionally and repeatedly the target of the negative actions of a stronger or more powerful person or group that cause fear, emotional stress and/or physical harm.

Prevention

1. The division recognizes that prevention and early intervention are key to addressing bullying behaviours. It is, therefore, expected that all schools address the following:
 - 1.1 Education and awareness
 - 1.2 Research based prevention initiatives and interventions
 - 1.3 School policy development and review in consultation with school community councils, community representatives and organizations where possible

Procedures

1. When bullying occurs or is reported the following steps will be taken to deal with the problem:

- 1.1 The in-school administration, classroom teachers and school staff will respond by providing a clear message that bullying will not be tolerated.
- 1.2 All instances of bullying are to be reported to the in-school administration and the classroom teacher(s) directly involved with the student.
- 1.3 The onus is on the victim, student/staff witness, or parent/caregiver to report incidents of bullying as soon as reasonably possible.
- 1.4 The in-school administrator, classroom teacher(s) and/or appropriate school staff will listen, investigate, offer support and determine the appropriate course of action.
- 1.5 Evident bullying behaviour will be addressed by in-school administration and action taken with students will take into account age and maturity, type of behaviours, frequency and/or patterns of behaviours, context of incident, and any other relevant information. Action taken by school staff will be recorded on the incident report form (Form 355-1) and filed with in-school administration. Any plan involving disciplinary action will follow AP 355.
- 1.6 In a timely fashion, the classroom teacher(s) and/or appropriate school staff will monitor the action taken, keep the in-school administration informed and, if appropriate, contact the parent/caregiver, of each student involved to inform them of the incident and how it is being handled.
- 1.7 The utilization of other resource personnel may be required from division office personnel, R.C.M.P to other appropriate resources.
- 1.8 The in-school administrator, classroom teacher (s) and/or appropriate school staff will assess and assist victims of bullying by providing additional support and/or referrals to responsive services personnel or outside agencies as needed.
- 1.9 Bullying behaviours that continue to escalate will result in more severe consequences.

2. The school division will involve the school community council and school community including staff, students, parents and community members in a regular review of the student bullying administrative procedure and school level policy to determine what is working and what needs to be strengthened to reduce problems of bullying.

Reference: Section 148, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 175, 231 Education Act
Ministry of Education: Bullying Prevention- A Model Policy, 2006