

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

*“Just as you did it to one of the least who are members of my family,
you did it to me.” Matthew 25*

POLICY

CODE: A 3.5

The London District Catholic School Board is committed to maintaining safe schools and workplaces, free from bullying and other forms of aggression.

Consistent with the Safe Schools Act and the London District Catholic School Board Code of Conduct, all students, staff, parents and community members will demonstrate respect for others and contribute to a shared responsibility to create and maintain safe and caring schools free from bullying.

Policy Statement

- Bullying adversely affects students’ ability to learn.
- Bullying adversely affects healthy relationships and the school climate.
- Bullying adversely affects a school's ability to educate its students.
- 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.

Definition of Bullying

In Policy/Program Memorandum No. 144, released by the Ministry of Education on October 19, 2009, “bullying” has been defined as:

“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 be size, strength, age, intelligence, economic status, social status, solidarity of peer group, religion, ethnicity, disability, need for special education, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, 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). 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 website, or other technology).

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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.

Review date: Every three years.

Adopted: January 28, 2008

Revised: August 30, 2010

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Prevention Strategies

Supporting Positive Student Behaviour

- Schools will establish programs, such as bullying prevention and citizenship development, as well as positive activities designed to promote the building of healthy relationships and appropriate behaviour.
- Schools will focus on prevention and early intervention as a key to maintaining a positive school environment in which students can learn.
- Schools will develop prevention measures and initiatives that include the whole school and all aspects of school life.
- 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.
- When these relationships are founded on mutual respect and inclusion, and modelled by all, a culture of respect becomes the norm.

Teaching Strategies

- Teaching strategies will support the school-wide bullying prevention strategies.
- Teaching strategies will focus on developing healthy relationships by including bullying prevention throughout the curriculum in daily classroom teaching.
- In every grade, curriculum expectations will include bullying prevention strategies such as conflict resolution and peer mediation. Teachers must be aware of these links and use them to promote tolerance, respect and empathy, all of which are important components of bullying prevention.

Opportunities for Bullying Prevention Training

- All students will have the opportunity to participate in bullying prevention training and leadership initiatives within their own school.
- In addition to teachers and administrators, other staff, such as educational assistants, social workers, school support staff, attendance counsellors, and other members of the community all play an important role in supporting students and contributing to a positive learning and teaching environment.

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- A positive school climate also includes the participation of the school community, including parents, as well as the broader community.

Intervention Strategies

- (a) Intervention to stop bullying is a community responsibility including school administrators, teachers, Board professional staff, parents, students, parish teams and community agencies.
- (b) The goal of intervention measures is to stop incidences of bullying and to foster a positive learning and teaching environment that supports academic achievement to all students and that helps students reach their full potential.
- (c) Intervention will be consistent with a progressive discipline approach that utilizes a continuum of supports and consequences to address inappropriate student behaviour and builds upon strategies that promotes positive behaviour.
- (d) Intervention strategies range from early interventions to more intensive interventions in cases of persistent bullying, with possible referral to community or social service agencies.
- (e) Ongoing intervention may be necessary to sustain and promote positive student behaviour.
- (f) Information about reporting incidences of bullying safely and in a way that will minimize the possibility of reprisal will be provided to students and parents.

Roles and Responsibilities

Bullying prevention requires input and participation from everyone in the school community. All stakeholders have a role to play to prevent bullying.

Principal

In addressing bullying prevention and intervention, the principal will take a leadership role in the school. They will provide leadership by:

- demonstrating care for the school community and a commitment to academic excellence in a safe teaching and learning environment;

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- holding everyone under their authority accountable for his or her behaviour and actions and inaction in the face of bullying;
- empowering students to be positive leaders in their school and community;
- communicating regularly and meaningfully with all members of their school community;
- ensuring the communication of local bullying prevention policies includes a communication plan that outlines how these provisions will be made clear to the entire school community, including school communities who have a significant number of parents whose first language is not English; and
- providing an example of respect and civility for all members of the school community.

Teachers and Other School Staff Members

Under the leadership of their principals, teachers and other school staff members maintain order in the school and are expected to hold everyone to the highest standard of respectful and responsible behaviour. As role models, teachers and school staff uphold these high standards when they:

- help students work to their full potential and develop their sense of self-worth;
- empower students to be positive leaders in their classroom, school, and community;
- communicate regularly and meaningfully with parents;
- maintain consistent standards of behaviours for all students;
- demonstrate respect for all students, staff, parents, volunteers, and the members of the school community;
- prepare students for the full responsibility of citizenship.

Teachers shall also assist principals in maintaining close co-operation with the school community and in establishing and maintaining consistent disciplinary practices in the school. In addition, teachers must assist the principals by reporting incidents of bullying and assisting the principal in conducting an investigation.

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Parents

As primary caregivers and original role models for their children, and as partners in Catholic Education, parents play an important role in the education of their children and have a responsibility to support the school community in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all members. Parents fulfill their role when they:

- Are actively engaged in their child’s learning, social development and faith development;
- Regularly engage in two-way communication with their child’s teacher(s) and support staff;
- Read and familiarize themselves with information provided by the school regarding Ministry, Board, and School Policies;
- Support and model behaviour outlined in Ministry, Board and/or School Policy by demonstrating respect for all students, staff, volunteers, the other parents and members of the community;
- Work with the school community to prevent, address, and correct discipline issues involving their child.

Parents also assist Staff and Principals through representation on local Catholic School Councils and participation in establishing and maintaining the school’s Code of Conduct and Safe School’s Policy.

Students

Ideally, bullying prevention strategies will engage students to examine their own behaviour as perpetrator, victim, or by-stander, and commit to a shared mission of safe and healthy schools free from bullying.

Students must demonstrate respect for themselves, for others, and for the responsibilities of citizenship through acceptable behaviour. Respect and responsibility are demonstrated when a student:

- fulfills the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations and lives the Gospel message;
- comes to school prepared, on time, and ready to learn;
- shows respect for himself or herself, for others, and for those in authority;
- refrains from bringing anything to school that may compromise the safety of others; and
- follows the established rules and take responsibility for his or her own actions.

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Students are also expected to:

- exercise self-discipline;
- accept such discipline as would be exercised by a kind, firm and judicious parent;
- be courteous to fellow pupils and obedient and courteous of teachers;
- show respect for school property; and
- understand and comply with their school’s code of conduct;

Training Strategies for Members of the School Community

Training programs regarding bullying prevention and intervention will be put in place for all administrators, teachers and educational assistants. This training will include cultural sensitivity, respect for diversity and special education needs. Training will be made available to all other adults that have significant contact with students, including, but not limited to, other school staff, school bus drivers and volunteers.

Communication Strategies

- a) This policy will be posted on the LDCSB Policy web site and communicated to students, parents, teachers, Catholic School Advisory Councils, volunteers and school bus operators or drivers and any other school staff;
- b) Each member of the school community, including, but not limited to, principals, teachers, parents and students will be made aware of their roles and responsibilities under this policy;
- c) The Board will make every effort to share this information with parents whose first language is a language other than English.

Monitoring and Review

The Board will establish a monitoring and review process to determine the effectiveness of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and procedures. This process will include the following:

- an analysis of the school climate through anonymous surveys of students, staff members and parents provided by their schools; and

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- performance indicators for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of the Board’s Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy.