



BULLYING AND THREATENING BEHAVIOUR

Background

Bullying or threatening behaviour directed towards students, employees, parents, volunteers and community members will have an adverse effect on the learning environment.

The Division is committed to providing a safe working environment for students, employees, parents, volunteers, and community members. Schools will intervene effectively to reduce bullying and threatening behaviour by developing a safe and supportive school climate.

Definitions

A safe school is:

- Orderly and purposeful.
- Free of physical and psychological harm.
- Respectful and sensitive to diversity.
- An environment of non-violence.

A *threat* is a declaration of intention to punish or hurt. It indicates a menace of physical or psychological harm or injury to reputation or property. The threat may be delivered to a person directly or indirectly. Threats of immediate physical danger will follow the Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Protocol. Although there may be no threat of physical danger, threats of a psychological nature or those suggesting injury to reputation are quite serious and require a sensitive reaction.

Bullying is repeated and hostile or demeaning behaviour by an individual where the behaviour is intended to cause harm, fear, or distress to another individual in the school community, including psychological harm or harm to the individual's reputation. Bullying may include verbal or written abuse or threats; insulting, derogatory or degrading comments, jokes or gestures; or personal ridicule or malicious gossip. Bullying may be subtle or overt, threatened or actual, and verbal, physical, or electronic in nature.

Procedures

Principal shall:

- a. Ensure all members of the school community are aware of the expectation to model respectful conduct, inclusive behaviour, and an understanding and appreciation for diversity, equity, and human rights.
- b. Receive, investigate, report on, and respond to inappropriate behaviour and actions, such as threats, intimidation, or bullying.



- c. Create a clear reporting and investigative process and a safe environment for students and parents/guardians to bring concerns forward in a timely manner.
- d. Work with staff, students, and families to provide supports and resolve issues and concerns in a timely fashion.

Teachers shall:

- a. Create and maintain welcoming, caring, respectful, safe and inclusive learning environments.
- b. Assist students to be positive leaders in their classroom, school and community by building social, interpersonal, assertiveness, empathy, conflict resolution, and leadership skills;
- c. Maintain consistent standards of behaviour for all students to contribute to a positive school climate.
- d. Communicate regularly and meaningfully with parents/guardians on matters related to student behaviours that jeopardize safe and respectful learning environments.
- e. Report incidents of threats, intimidation, and bullying, and assist administration when conducting an investigation into such incidents.

Students shall:

- a. Cooperate with everyone authorized by the Division to provide services and programs and comply with the rules of the school and the policies of the Board.
- b. Contribute to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging. Students have the right to be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness by other students and staff.
- c. Refrain from demonstrating any form of bullying, harassment, threats, intimidation or discrimination on the basis of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, ancestry, place of origin, family status or sexual orientation.
- d. Be accountable for their behaviour, whether or not it occurs within the school building, on school property, during the school day, or by electronic means. When behaviour that occurs off school property or outside of regular school hours threatens the safety or well-being of individuals within the school community or disrupts the learning environment, school administrators may apply consequences for the behaviour.
- e. Seek assistance to resolve conflict in a peaceful, safe, and non-threatening manner that is conducive to learning and growth. Strategies for addressing conflict between students may include counselling, mediation, or forms of restorative practice.
- f. Be aware of examples of unacceptable behaviour including, but not limited to:
 - Behaviours that interfere with the learning of others and/or the school environment.
 - Behaviours that create unsafe conditions.



- Acts of bullying, discrimination, racism, harassment, threats, or intimidation whether it be in person, indirectly, or by electronic means.
- Physical violence.
- Retribution against any person who has intervened to prevent or report bullying or any other incident or safety concern.

Responses to unacceptable behavior

1. Unacceptable behaviour may be grounds for disciplinary action. Responsive discipline provides the student with an opportunity for critical learning and reflection in the areas of personal accountability and responsibility, the development of empathy, as well as communication, conflict resolution and social skills development.
2. Responses to unacceptable behaviour must take into account the student's age, maturity, individual circumstances, and frequency of misconduct. The specific circumstances of the situation and of the student must be taken into account when determining appropriate responses to unacceptable behaviour. When a student engages in unacceptable behaviour, responses, interventions and consequences may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Temporary assignment of a student to an alternate supervised area within the school.
 - b. Temporary assignment of a student to an alternate learning location.
 - c. Short term removal of privileges.
 - d. Interventions such as positive behaviour supports, contracts, and counselling.
 - e. Restorative practices, where appropriate and agreed upon by impacted students.
 - f. Replacement or restitution for loss of or damage to property.
 - g. In-school or out-of-school suspension.
 - h. Recommendation for expulsion.
3. Responses to unacceptable behaviour include support for students impacted by unacceptable behaviour as well as students who engage in unacceptable behaviour.

Reference: Section 33, 52, 53, 197, 204, 222 Education Act
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Individual Rights Protection Act
Supporting Safe, Secure and Caring Schools in Alberta (1999)