

## **Bullying and Harassment**

### **-POLICY-**

The Board supports all reasonable and fair measures, both proactive and in response to an incident, taken by staff to respond to acts of bullying and harassment. It is expected that all schools will offer proactive programs to inform and educate students and parents about bullying.

The Board shall consider any act of bullying and harassment, whether it occurs going to and from school, on school premises, in the vicinity of the school, or at any school-sponsored activity, to be a serious threat to the school environment and to the safety of both students and staff and shall be dealt with in accordance with the accompanying regulations and the school's discipline policy.

Suspension of a student may be a course of action taken by the principal or superintendent. The principal, the superintendent, or their designates, shall have the authority to suspend a student.

### **-REGULATION-**

1. **Definitions:**

a. School Environment

The school environment includes travel to and from school, being in the vicinity of the school, on school property, or in attendance at a school-sponsored activity. In some cases, the school environment may include incidents outside of the regular school environment described above, but involving students on a school related matter.

While on school property during the normal school day, riding in a school bus, or participating in a school activity, the principal is responsible for assuring that there is adequate supervision of students. If a student walks to and from school, the student is responsible to the principal for her/his actions. If a parent or guardian transports a student, the parent is responsible for supervising the student.

Being in the "vicinity of the school" applies during the period of time that a student is normally in transit to, in attendance at or in transit from, the school or in attendance at a school function.

**b. Bullying and Harassment**

The most widely accepted definition of bullying is: “a pattern of aggressive behaviour, with negative intent, directed from one child to another where there is a power imbalance.”  
(Dan Olweus, quoted in the B.C. Ministry of Education publication, *Focus on Bullying*)

Bullying behaviours can be broken down into three general categories: physical, verbal/emotional, and social bullying.

Examples of physical bullying may include hitting, punching, kicking, or unwelcome touching. Verbal or emotional bullying may include name-calling, teasing, taunting, racist, homophobic or sexual slurs, or rumour spreading.

Social bullying can include threatening notes, letters, emails, text messages, social media, and general exclusion from a group.

Student-to-student bullying that takes the form of sexual harassment is another important issue, as the Criminal Code and Section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms prohibit sexual harassment.

(see *Schoolyard Bullying: The Impact of Human Rights in Schools*, and The British Columbia Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, *Call It Safe*, 2003)

2. This Policy and Regulations shall be considered when developing and reviewing the school Code of Conduct, be provided yearly to students, parents, and staff, and form the basis for ongoing educational programs about bullying to be presented to students and the school community on a regular basis.
3. School Codes of Conduct shall include a provision that bullying will:
  - Be investigated and acted upon by the educator involved following the process approved by the school administrator, with the school administrator to be advised of the incident;
  - Take into consideration the context of the incident and the sometimes complex interrelationship between the students involved;
  - Give priority to protecting the identity and safety of the victim;
  - Provide support for all students involved; and
  - Result in a progressive intervention plan or set of consequences for the bully.
4. When there is a finding that harassment, intimidation or bullying has occurred intervention will be:
  - Appropriate to the degree of misconduct.
  - Educative, preventive and/or restorative, and
  - Implemented in a timely manner.

Appropriate intervention may include, for example, one or more of the following actions:

- Allowing an opportunity for those harmed by the behaviour to explain to the perpetrator that his/her conduct is unwelcome, offensive or inappropriate either in writing or face-to-face,
- A statement from the principal/designate to an individual that such behaviour is not appropriate and could lead to discipline,
- Arranging measures which are designed to provide those harmed with restitution of status or sense of self-worth,
- Counselling or educative measures designed to support any students involved with harassment, intimidation or bullying – including both those who may have been harmed and those who are responsible.
- Disciplinary measures up to and including suspension or expulsion from a regular educational program,

The administrator of the school shall ensure that there is a thorough investigation of all incidents of bullying, seek the advice of District staff when needed, report criminal activity to the RCMP, and will, depending on the severity of the bullying, the age of the child or youth, as well as other relevant circumstances and past history, including the learning and behavioural needs of the child, determine the level in the process that will be applied.