

Yorkdale SS & ALC Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan

A. Definition of Bullying

Bullying- is typically a form of repeated, persistent and aggressive behaviour that is 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. [Ministry of Education's Policy/Program Memorandum No. 144, Bullying Prevention and Intervention, October 4, 2007]

Students may attain or maintain power over others in the school through real or perceived differences. Some areas of difference include but are not limited to 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, cellphones, text messaging, Internet Web site, or other technology).

Cyberbullying- the use of information and communication technologies, such as e-mail, cellphone and pager text messages, instant messaging, personal Web sites and on-line personal polling Web sites, to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group, which is intended or perceived to harm others.

Bullying prevention a whole-school approach that heightens expectations for a safe, caring and inclusive school climate. It includes a shared understanding about the nature and underlying causes of bullying and its effects on the lives of individual students and the school community.

Bullying intervention a comprehensive and effective response to the bullying incident that takes into consideration all parties involved in the bullying incident. It should provide specific supports for the student who has been bullied, intervention for the student who was bullying, and strategies for responding to students who were directly observing the bullying incident.

B. Prevention Strategies

1. Support and Maintain a Safe, Caring, and Inclusive School Climate

- Implement school-wide workshops that address bias, stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination based on the 16 prohibited grounds of discrimination outlined in the TDSB Human Rights Policy;
- Provide students with knowledge and processes outlined in the TDSB Know Your Rights and Responsibilities pamphlet

2. Implement a Continuum of Prevention Strategies and Empowerment Programs

- Equity and Human Rights Education;
- Character Development;
- Student Leadership;
- Eco-Schools;
- Conflict Resolution Programs, such as Peer Mediators, Peace Circles, etc

3. Promote Positive Classroom Learning Environments

- Implement common classroom management strategies such as Tribes, Second Step, etc.;
- Engage student responsibilities in ensuring classroom norms are respected

4. Make Connections between Bullying Prevention and Curriculum Expectations

- Media Literacy Strand;
- Critical Literacy and Higher-Order Thinking;
- Citizenship Education;
- Co-operative Games

5. Ensure Individual Accommodations and Safety Plans for Students with Special Needs

- ACL Special Education will monitor needs and liaise with administration and staff

6. Model Appropriate Adult Behaviour and Presence During Non-Instructional Time

- Ensure staff have a common language around what a safe, caring, and inclusive looks, sounds, and feels like;
- Engage all staff in supervision roles;
- Identify and monitor high-risk areas

Procedures that allow students to report bullying incidents safely and in a way that will minimize the possibility of reprisal and define the responsibilities and roles of the principal, teachers, and students shall be developed. Our school will:

Role of Principal

- Ensure sure all school staff are aware of the dangers students may experience when reporting bullying incidents;
- Principal/Staff should be aware of the possible power difference between aggressor and victim and not investigate or question students about a bullying incident when the various parties are in the same room (bystanders, target, perpetrator);
- Schools may use a tip line where students can call in anonymously.

Role of Teachers

- Staff should be cautious when revealing the names of the students who disclosed the bullying incident to anyone other than the principal/vice principal
- Principal/Staff should not investigate or question students about a bullying incident when the various parties are in the same room (bystanders, target, perpetrator)
- Use creative means to keep the identity of the student who reported unknown to other students (i.e. unofficial suspension, calling students down at staggered times, etc.);
- Staff need to be aware of the underlying culture of the school, with regards to how reporting is viewed by the student body (supporter or snitches);
- Discussions with class, regarding snitching, helping, etc. should be done on a regular basis;
- Teach students the difference between ratting and helping/ getting someone in trouble or getting someone out of trouble;
- Teach students the acronym R.A.T. – Right Action Taken.

Role of Students

- Disclose any concerns/fears to administrators, teachers, and staff about reporting incidents of bullying;
- Support peers who do report and try to create a caring school community;
- Student leaders can organize “Special Days” which focus on standing up against bullying, and creating a Safe, Caring, and Inclusive School.

C. Intervention Strategies

Level 1 Incidents – School Plan

Respond to Students who have bullied others

- Intervene quickly to stop the incident;
- Describe the behaviour to all the students involved in terms that are clear and direct;
- Point out the impact of the individual's behaviour;
- Remind the students of school's Code of Conduct;
- Use "How to Handle Harassment in the Hallways in Three Minutes;"
- See Let's Stop The Bullying for more examples;
- Monitor the student's behaviour;
- Positively reinforce safe interaction.

Responding to Students who have been bullied

- After stopping the incident, check in with student to see if they are alright;
- Offer support to the student and let them know staff, guidance, or administrators are there if necessary;
- Ask student if they feel safe at school.

Responding to Students observing the bullying incident

- If appropriate, discuss with students the impact that bullying has on everyone;
- Discuss what actions may be taken in the future to help reduce bullying at the school;
- Offer support if any student feels uncomfortable, upset, or frightened;
- Explain how bystanders can either support bullying or reduce bullying based on their actions.

Level 2 Incidents – School Plan

Respond to Students who have bullied others

- Calmly separate the parties involved;
- Send the students responsible for bullying to a predetermined location (e.g. edge of the grounds, office, classroom) and tell them there will be follow-up. Student may need to be escorted by another staff;
- Gather information from the student and why they were behaving in such a hurtful manner;
- Assure student that there will be follow-up with the student who was bullied;

- Make a plan to prevent bullying – brainstorm solutions – “Where and with whom will you hang out?”, “What can you do if you feel this way again?” This student may need an individual safety plan to help her/him gain control over his/her behaviour and to protect other students. This may include:
 - Supervision upon arrival at school, during recess, lunch, after school
 - Designated areas of play
 - Specific behaviour management strategies
 - Involving the student in positive activities with peers
 - Scheduled review and assessment of plan.
- Follow-up on the plan – let student know you will continue to check in with her or him from time to time. Also, let the student know that the student who was bullied also has a safety plan;
- Inform student about the plan developed to prevent further bullying and the consequences for the student. In cases of repeated bullying, administration may choose to have a meeting with the student to:
 - Review the plan to support the student
 - Listen to students’ concerns and answer questions
 - Ask for input for support of the plan
 - Discuss possible referral for counselling
- Explore referrals – social worker, guidance, etc.

Responding to Students who have been bullied

- Acknowledge the incident – this is very difficult for the targeted student;
- Assure student that action will be taken with the student who bullied;
- Gather all information (who, what, where, how long has this been going on? etc.);
- Make a safety plan - brainstorm solutions “Where and with whom will you play?” “What can you do if bullying continues?” “Whom will you tell if there is another incident?”
- Follow-up plan within a few days – let student know you will check in with her or him from time to time. Also, let student know that there will be consequences for the student(s) who bullied;

- Explore the possibility for referral for counselling – may be necessary to help build self-esteem, practice assertive responses, and enhance social skills;

Responding to Students observing the bullying incident

- Describe what happened;
- Discuss with students the effect the bullying incident had on them and offer support;
- Discuss what affect their behaviour had on the student who was exhibiting bully behaviour and on the student who was bullied. Can ask...
 - At what point did you make the choice to stay and watch the bullying happen?
 - How might your presence have influenced the behaviour of the student who was bullying?
 - What were your feelings as you watched the bullying incident?
 - “What could you have done differently, either to stop or prevent the incident?”
 - “What could you do now to make the student who was bullied feel included, cared for, and safer at school?”
- Assure bystanders that follow-up is in process

D. Training Strategies for Members of the School Community

Bullying Prevention & Intervention

- Staff development on the underlying causes of bullying from a safe, caring, and inclusive schools perspective;
- In-services on effective classroom management (e.g. Tribes, Second Step, etc.) and effective conflict resolution strategies (e.g. Peace Circles);
- Workshops on Level 1 Interventions using how to Handle Harassment in the Hallways in Three Minutes

Cultural Sensitivity and respect for Diversity

- Human rights and equity education in-services focusing on policy and practical applications to school and classroom;
- Anti-racism and ethnocultural equity training for all staff;
- Differentiated instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students;
- Culturally relevant pedagogy

Special Education Needs

- In-services regarding the special needs of students and effective accommodations;
- Staff development on working with special needs students, including the collaborative creation of student safety plans

E. Communication and Out Reach Strategies

- The Student Planners will have inserts which discuss Bullying and Harassment, and what students can do if they experience bullying;
- The Staff Newsletter and School Website will be key vehicles for communicating information on the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan to staff, students, and the community;
- Morning announcements will make reference to character attributes, equity and human rights, bullying awareness, and safety in schools;

- Can organize guest speakers for student assemblies (or “lunch & learns” during the pandemic), who will discuss safety, bullying prevention and intervention, equity and human rights, and character development;
- Revise school code of behaviour to ensure that bullying and cyber bullying are included.

F. Monitoring and Review Processes

Keeping the Plan Alive

- Information on the plan will be provided on the school website;
- Information on bullying and harassment will be included in some issues of the school staff newsletter;
- A part of most staff meetings will be devoted to the school Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan;
- Some morning announcements will include a quote/statement which relates to Safe, Caring, and Inclusive Classrooms;
- Each year the school will update and review the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan;
- Submit plan to Superintendent of Education by November 30th.

Monitor the Plan

- All bullying incidents will be recorded and tracked in the office;
- By using a Bullying Incident Report, staff will be able to specify which forms of bullying incidents are occurring, where they are occurring, and when they are occurring;
- Interested students will be able to meet and discuss school safety;
- The school will administer a School Safety Survey each year;
- Results of the survey will be shared with all students and staff.