2023-2024

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Promoting Healthy Relationships within Positive School Climates

Lester B. Pearson PS

OUR SCHOOL COMMITMENT

We are committed to establishing and supporting learning and working environments that are safe, welcoming, respectful, equitable, accessible, inclusive and free from discrimination, oppression and harm. Indigenous inherent rights, human rights and equity are at the center of our work. This fundamental commitment to human rights begins with meaningful investment in a Positive School Climate.

A Positive School Climate:

- Ensures that everyone is treated with dignity and respect;
- Expects, welcomes and includes everyone;
- Values, affirms and supports the expression of diverse identities;
- Promotes, protects and upholds Indigenous inherent rights and human rights – including students' right to education without discrimination and employees' right to employment without discrimination;
- Centres the rights of the child/student in ways that are not discriminatory and that do not cause or perpetuate harm;
- Prioritizes relationships, well-being and equity through a Whole School Approach.

While we work proactively to promote positive and respectful interactions, we will also address any behaviour or interaction that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate, including bullying, discrimination and other forms of harmful interaction. In planning our responses, we will consider and provide support for all impacted staff and students, including those who were harmed, those who witnessed the harm, and those who caused harm.

We will promote a Positive School Climate in both proactive and responsive ways.

MINISTRY STATEMENTS

*"*A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included, and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions. Principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in the learning environment to support a positive school climate and a culture of mutual respect. A positive school climate is a crucial component of bullying prevention."

Taken from Ministry of Education of Ontario, PPM 145

"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."

Taken from Ministry of Education of Ontario, PPM 144

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Healthy Relationships are grounded in treating one another with dignity and respect.

Healthy Relationships provide:

- A sense of security and stability
- Basic needs
- A sense of being valued and belonging
- Support and guidance to learn essential skills and understanding
- Protection from excessive stress

All adults who are responsible for children play an important role in teaching them about healthy relationships and bullying. Teachers, parents/guardians, and other adults involved in children's lives:

- Model relationship skills and attitudes
- Create positive situations in which children and youth interact.

Children will only learn positive relationship skills and attitudes if they observe and interact with adults who model positive relationships when interacting with children and adults.

PREVNet

HARMFUL INTERACTIONS

Bullying: Aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a pupil where…

(a) the behaviour is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behaviour would be likely to have the effect of,

i. causing harm, fear or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social or academic harm, harm to the individual's reputation or harm to the individual's property, or

ii. creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, and

(b) the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the pupil and the individual based on factors such as ancestry, size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power (e.g., popularity), economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, disability or the receipt of special education

For the purposes of the definition of "bullying", behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

Aggression: A response to conflict, threat or an internal emotional state of anger/irritability in which the intent to harm may or may not be present. Aggression…

(a) can take direct or indirect forms, including physical, verbal, social and electronic
(b) can become bullying when a power imbalance in a relationship develops over time because repeated acts of aggression may intimidate the person on the receiving end

Teasing: A type of "playful" interaction that can range from positive (e.g., bantering, joshing, ribbing) to negative (e.g., mocking, pestering, tormenting)

(a) Positive teasing takes place within a healthy relationship. It is good natured, fun and reciprocal.
(b) Negative teasing is characterized by words or actions that cause harm on one or both sides of the interaction. Negative teasing harms relationships as well as the school climate.

Slurs and personal insults: The use of discriminatory, targeted or hateful language that is focused on Human Rights Code grounds, a person's identity or personal characteristics is never acceptable, whether this language is used in the context of bullying, conflict, teasing or aggression. These include:

(a) Slurs and phrases that dehumanize, mock, ostracize, discriminate against or victimize others based on race, Indigenous identity, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religion, ethnicity, neurodivergent traits, ability, financial status, family status, etc.
(b) Personal insults that target traits like body type and other physical characteristics, "intelligence," personality traits or personal interests

Conflict: A normal type of interaction that everyone should learn to navigate and resolve effectively. Conflict may be distinguished from other harmful interactions in that…

(a) there is no power imbalance between those in conflict, or at least, the power imbalance is not being weaponized by the person with more power
(b) all parties are typically invested in resolving the conflict (or at least ending it)
(c) conflict most often occurs among people who share an existing relationship: classmates, siblings, friends, partners, colleagues, etc.
(d) tensions underlying the conflict are not related to identity (e.g., ancestry, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion) and may be amplified by stressors for one or both parties in conflict
(e) conflict typically centers on disagreement, personal errors, unclear or unmet expectations, or poor communication

Cyber-bullying: For the purposes of the definition of “bullying” seen here, bullying includes bullying by electronic means (commonly known as cyber-bullying), including,

(a) creating a web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
(b) impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet; and
(c) communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.

Our Positive School Climates Team (Previously known as "Safe and Accepting School Team")

Our Positive School Climate Team leads our planning to promote a safe, inclusive, and welcoming school climate.

- **Chair:** M. Garey
- **Teacher:** K. Gray
- **Principal:** C. Marolt
- **Support Staff:** N. Ross

Strengths and Goals

What the Data Tells Us – School Climate and Well-being Surveys and Other Data

As part of the on-going monitoring and evaluation process, schools gather data from various of sources, including school climate surveys of students, staff and parents/caregivers every two years. Our school data indicates the following:

Strengths:

- 86% of students surveyed feel safe at school.
- 91% of students surveyed have not seen others being bullied.
- 94% of parents/caregivers surveyed indicate students feel accepted by staff.
- 89% of students, staff, and parents/caregivers surveyed say students support each other.

Based on the analysis of various sources of data, our school has identified specific bullying prevention and intervention goal statements for this school year. These goal statements will drive our actions for this year. Outcomes will be monitored and assessed using a continuous improvement cycle.

Goals:

- Students see themselves reflected in the classroom and the school, feel important and like they belong.
- Continue developing school-based practices that promote a positive tone, safety and belonging, acceptance, inclusion and respect.
- Engage student voice, making students partners in classroom and school decision-making, in both learning experiences and leadership initiatives.

Proactive Approaches

What We are Doing in Our Classrooms and in Our School - Strategies that Promote a Positive School Climate

Our school is implementing a variety of strategies to support student well-being, affirm and promote diverse identities, and create a welcoming environment. These strategies involve students, staff, parents and community members as part of a whole school approach. Below are highlights of our strategies:

- Review Code of Conduct with students
- Monthly character education assemblies recognizing positive behaviour
- Orange Shirt Day

- Progressive Discipline (a whole school approach) with “Own It, Fix It, Learn from It, Move on” to work through conflicts
- Restorative practice to create a positive learning community that includes building, maintaining, and repairing relationships
- Pink Shirt Day activities
- Bullying awareness and prevention activities
- Intermediate Student Leadership initiatives
- Ongoing communication between home and school regarding school initiatives
- Inviting guest speakers in to inspire us to be the best we can be (e.g., Peacekeeper from Veterans Affairs, Durham Region Police Services)
- Ongoing actions to support belonging for the whole school community (e.g., welcome and greet, ongoing dialogue including talking about interests outside of the school, check-ins, etc.)
- Clubs and teams that promote relationship-building, friendship, and collaboration
- SCC initiatives (e.g., Community Day)
- Well-being and Wellness Initiatives (e.g., Mental Health Awareness Week in May)

How Student Voice is Present in Our School

Engaging students to help shape the learning environment is an important component of a whole school approach in promoting a positive school climate – a climate in which *each and every* student feels that they matter. The following examples are highlights of student voice in action at our school:

- Student Leadership Opportunities (e.g., Positive School Climates Team, announcements, assemblies, student-designed leadership initiatives)
- Learning experiences, resources and materials reflect student interests
- Student choice in learning tasks and activities

How we create the conditions whereby students feel safe to report bullying and other harmful interactions at our school.

Creating the conditions within which students may feel safe to report begins with investment in relationship and the promotion of a Positive School Climate. Additionally, procedures may be put in place that facilitate students and parent/caregiver reporting as well as procedures that outline the requirements for staff to report such instances in accordance with legislation.

Student Reporting:

- Reporting bullying or other harmful interactions to a trusted adult (e.g., parent/caregiver, teacher, administrator, support staff, police liaison officer).
- Using the “Report Bullying Now” button on the school/board website provides students a more discreet means of reporting bullying behaviours.

Staff Reporting:

- “The Education Act states that an employee of the board who becomes aware that a student at the school of the board may have engaged in a serious student incident shall report the matter to the principal as soon as reasonably possible” (PPM 144)
- When appropriate, staff complete and submit the “Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part I” to the principal. The principal provides written acknowledgement to the employee using the “Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part II” (PPM 144)

Parent/Community Reporting:

- Reporting bullying and other harmful interactions to the classroom teacher, support staff and/or administration
- Using the "Report Bullying Now" button on the school website

Strategies that help students to feel safe to report (e.g., relationship-building strategies, reporting mechanisms, awareness-building)

- Caring and respectful relationships
- High expectations for behaviour
- Bias aware progressive discipline
- Build awareness of reporting tools and strategies (e.g., tell a trusted adult, Report Bullying Now button on website)

How We Are Building Capacity for Promoting Healthy Relationships as Part of a Positive School Climate at Our School.

Training/learning opportunities occur at the board level, community level and school level. Here are highlights of our training/learning opportunities:

Students:

- Code of Conduct
- Monthly Character Education Assemblies
- Student Leadership Initiatives
- Teachers provide training in response to learning needs (whole class, small-group, one on one – e.g., self-regulation, social emotional learning, Zones of Regulation)
- Guest speakers

Staff:

- Professional Book Clubs – based on educator preferences and professional interests (Universal Design for Learning, equity in grading, Indigenous education, cultivating Black excellence, fostering resilient learners)
- Staff participate in workshops related to safe schools, equity and inclusion, Indigenous education, special education, and self-regulation

Parents/caregivers:

- Website – posted newsletter with information regarding events and initiatives occurring each month
- School Community Council initiatives (SCC meetings, Community Day)
- X (formerly Twitter) – updates and photos of initiatives in action

Responsive Approaches

How We Respond to Bullying and other harmful interactions at Our School

Our school response follows a bias-aware approach to progressive discipline that involves the following immediate and long-term actions:

- Ensuring the safety of all involved
- Responding to any student behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate

- Conducting a school-based investigation (consulting the Police/Board Protocol, when necessary and appropriate) considering mitigating, human rights and other factors
- Contacting the parents/caregivers of the person(s) who has been harmed and the parents/caregivers of the person(s) who has caused harm, in accordance with legislation
- Considering the broader context and implications of the harmful interaction (e.g., racism, homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, Islamophobia, antisemitism, faithism, classism, ableism, misogyny) in order to inform both immediate and long-term responses
- Developing an action plan that is responsive and supportive
- Taking concrete steps to repair relationship and restore a Positive School Climate
- Considering individual, class, and/or whole-school learning opportunities to foster the conditions wherein similar situations may be prevented in the future, e.g., providing a school-wide lesson or activity on anti-Asian racism in the context of COVID-19
- Consulting and collaborating with community partners, affinity groups and DDSB departments, as appropriate (e.g., DBEN, DENSA, KIEN, MEND, Equity, ISS, Indigenous Education, Positive School Climates)
- Implementing a Positive School Climates Student Safety Plan, when necessary
- Implementing/reviewing a Student Safety Plan (Inclusive Student Services), when appropriate

How We Provide Ongoing Support to Those Impacted by Bullying at Our School

Support for the person(s) who has been harmed, the person(s) who has caused harm and the person(s) who has witnessed harm may include:

- Furthering school-level support such as connection to a caring adult, classroom and yard considerations, special needs considerations, participation in co-curricular programming
- Implementing board-level supports such as social work or psychological services (with consent)
- Identifying community support resources
- Implementing a Student Safety Plan when necessary

Follow-up for the person(s) who has been harmed, the person(s) who has caused harm and the person(s) who has witnessed harm will include:

- Individual monitoring based on specific needs (e.g., regular check-ins)
- Conversations or learning opportunities as needed to support self-awareness, understanding of impact, social-emotional learning skills, and/or to inspire a shift in ideological trajectory if needed, e.g., in cases where ignorance, hate or discrimination are at play

Communication

How We are Communicating with Students, Staff, Parents/Caregivers and the Community

To support a whole school approach, the school will communicate with staff, students, parents/caregivers and the community. Communication methods include:

- Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan posted on website
- Newsletters to families with information and updates on website
- Classroom visits
- Morning announcements for students and staff

- X (Twitter) updates
- Staff meetings
- Emails
- Posters
- Discussions and conversations
- Staff updates through weekly memos
- Remind messages from staff to students and families
- Posts to Google Classroom

Continuous Improvement

As part of the continuous improvement model, the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be monitored regularly through:

- Positive School Climate Team meetings
- Staff meetings, division meetings, committee meetings
- School learning planning

Please visit Durham District School Board website for more information on how the Durham District School Board is supporting student well-being and promoting a positive school climate