ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE	
STUDENTS, PARENTS AND COMMUNITY	
Effective:	January 24, 2017
Last Revised:	

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

1. PURPOSE

Providing every student with an opportunity to learn and develop in a safe and respectful environment is a shared responsibility for Rainbow District School Board administrators and teachers, students, and parents.

Schools that use bullying prevention and intervention strategies foster a positive learning and teaching environment that supports academic achievement and well-being for all students. This administrative procedure provides direction to the system for the prevention of bullying and for intervention when inappropriate behaviour occurs.

2. DEFINITIONS

Bullying: Bullying is typically 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 the 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. Bullying 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, spreading rumours). It may also occur through the use of technology.

Cyberbullying: Cyberbullying is using electronic means to intimidate, harm, exclude, or ruin a reputation. Cyberbullying includes the use of e-mails and instant messaging, text or digital imaging sent on cell phones, web pages and web logs (blogs), chat rooms and discussion groups to spread rumours, images, or hurtful comments.

Although cyberbullying usually occurs outside the school, it can negatively affect the learning environment and student safety in the school. Where there is evidence that a student who has been intimidated is impaired in his or her ability to progress in school, or that the cyberbullying affects school safety and security, the principal will intervene as if the inappropriate behaviour was initiated in the school setting.

Mitigating and Other Factors: Mitigating and other factors must be taken into account when discipline is being considered. These factors are described in Ontario Regulation 472/07 Behaviour, Discipline and Safety of Pupils and in Rainbow District School Board administrative procedures related to student discipline.

School Climate: School climate is the sum total of all of the personal relationships within a school. A positive climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable, and accepted.

3. **APPLICATION**

This administrative procedure applies to all students of the Rainbow District School Board, and provides expectations for the staff, students, and parents.

PROCEDURES

4. **Bullying and the Learning Environment**

Bullying adversely affects healthy relationships, the school climate, and a school's ability to educate its students. It impacts negatively on students' ability to learn. Bullying will not be accepted on school property, at school-related activities, on school buses, or in any other circumstances, including cyber bullying, where engaging in bullying will have a negative impact on students and the school climate.

5. **School Prevention Strategies**

5.1.   Rainbow District School Board is committed to providing learning opportunities that promote social and emotional learning, as well as academic and physical growth. The board's multi-year plan, *Strategic Directions for Rainbow Schools*, stresses the importance of values, the community culture, and caring.

5.2   The principal is responsible for ensuring the implementation of bullying prevention strategies that include, but are not limited to:

   a.   anti-bullying sessions for students and parents;
   b.   cyber-bullying awareness sessions for students and parents;
   c.   character development programs; and
   d.   positive school discipline strategies.

5.3   A positive school climate is essential to the prevention of bullying behaviour. A positive climate is developed when administrators and teachers:

   a.   promote the development of supportive and inclusive relationships among the staff and student body and with parents and the broader community;

   b.   provide and support training for students and staff members that raises awareness of the problem of bullying;

   c.   know and follow Board policies and administrative procedures related to safe and inclusive schools;

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d.   reinforce bullying prevention messages through programs addressing discrimination based on such factors as age, race, sexual orientation, gender, faith, disability, ethnicity, and socio-economic disadvantage;

e.   post, communicate, and enforce clear codes of student conduct;

f.   assess the awareness and scope of the bullying problem at the school through school climate surveys;

g.   ensure that students are supervised in all areas of the school and on the school grounds, with particular attention being given to any areas where bullying has been identified as a problem in a particular school setting;

h.   find a variety of ways to reward students for positive, inclusive behaviour and to support them in being positive leaders in their school community;

i.   encourage parents to participate and become engaged in the life of the school and to volunteer to assist in school activities and projects; and

j.   involve school councils in the development of anti-bullying initiatives and the ongoing implementation of prevention programs.

5.4   When communicating with parents and school councils, staff members will provide information about bullying, including ways to support a child who reports being bullied or witnessing bullying.

5.5   The staff and parents can work together to teach children, not only about the dangers of being aggressive and striking back at a bully, but also about the need to be assertive and to develop age-appropriate independence. This independence can contribute to self-confidence and may deter bullies who often seek out acquiescent victims.

5.6   Administrators and teachers must regularly reinforce the message that bullying will not be tolerated in the school and that everyone must work together to create a positive learning environment.

6. Classroom Prevention Strategies

6.1   Teachers need to provide opportunities for students to talk about bullying. They will involve students in defining unacceptable behaviours and the harm they cause, and in establishing classroom rules against bullying and peer harassment.

6.2   Teachers must provide and regularly reinforce clear expectations for appropriate student behaviour.

6.3   Teachers promote cooperation by assigning projects that require collaboration. Such cooperation teaches students how to compromise and how to assert without demanding. Teachers vary the grouping of participants in these projects and monitor the treatment of participants in each group.

6.4   Teachers ensure that students know what to do when they experience or observe a bullying confrontation. Knowing the process to follow gives the students confidence and a feeling of security.

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6.5   Students are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying to school staff members as soon as these incidents are witnessed. In addition, students are expected to make contributions to maintain a positive school climate.

4.   **School Intervention Strategies**

7.1   School administrators and teachers will encourage students to make a confidential report if they are the victims of bullying or are aware of another victim or victims. Reporting methods are designed to minimize the possibility of reprisal. Such reports are investigated and resolved as soon as possible, consistent with administrative procedures related to student discipline.

7.2   Interventions are conducted in ways that are consistent with a progressive discipline approach. The strategies will range from early and ongoing interventions to more intensive interventions and consequences in cases of persistent bullying.

7.3   Teachers are expected to report any incidents of bullying to the principal in a timely manner.

7.4   School intervention strategies include, but are not limited to:

  • review of expectations
  • oral reminders
  • written work assignment with a learning component
  • detention
  • contact with parents
  • mediation/conflict resource including restitution and/or other restorative measures
  • referral to community agency for counseling, anger management, substance abuse program
  • withdrawal from class
  • meeting with parents
  • short-term suspension or long term suspension
  • expulsion

7.5   Bullying is one of the infractions for which a principal may consider suspension or expulsion from school. The principal will take into account any mitigating or other factors, which may apply.

8.   **Classroom Intervention Strategies**

8.1   Teachers will take immediate action when bullying is observed. Teachers will let students know that they care and will not allow anyone to be mistreated. By taking immediate action in dealing with the bully, educators support both the victim and the witness or witnesses.

8.2   Dealing with a bully does not necessarily mean confronting the bully in front of his or her peers. Teachers will usually confront the bully in private. Challenging a bully in front of his or her peers may actually enhance the bully's status and lead to further aggression.

8.3   Teachers or the principal, as appropriate, will notify the parents of both victims and bullies when a confrontation occurs, and seek to resolve the problem quickly at school. They will refer both victims and aggressors to counselling whenever appropriate.

8.4   Teachers provide protection and support for bullying victims whenever necessary, including creating a buddy system whereby students have a particular friend or older buddy on whom they can depend.

8.5   Teachers listen receptively to parents who report bullying, and investigate reported circumstances so that immediate and appropriate action can be taken.

8.6   Teachers avoid attempts to mediate a threatening bullying situation alone if they are uncomfortable. They will inform the principal who will address the situation as appropriate, including contacting police services.

9.   **Ongoing Monitoring and Review**

9.1   System administrators will monitor and review the prevention and intervention strategies to determine their effectiveness. This process will include a regular cycle of analysis of the school climate through anonymous surveys of the students, staff, and parents.

9.2   Schools must develop and implement school-wide bullying prevention and intervention strategies as part of their School Improvement Plan. The plans will also include strategies for training, communication and outreach, and monitoring and review processes.

9.3   The principal is responsible for the establishment of a Safe Schools Team, which will be composed of at least one student (where appropriate), one parent, one teacher, one support staff member, one community partner, and the principal. The team will have a staff chair.

9.4   The responsibility of the Safe Schools Team is to advise the principal on the development and annual review of strategies related to safety issues, including monitoring of prevention and intervention programs and procedures related to bullying.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Legal:
Education Act, Section 169.1 Positive School Climate
Education Act, Part XIII Behaviour, Discipline and Safety
Ontario Regulation 472/07 Behaviour, Discipline and Safety of Pupils
PPM No. 128 The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct
PPM No. 144 Bullying Prevention and Intervention
PPM No. 145 Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour

Board:
Board Policy No. GOV-01 Vision, Mission, and Values
Board Policy No. GOV-11 Learning and Working Environment: Equity and Inclusion
Board Policy No. GOV-12 Learning and Working Environment: Safe Schools
Strategic Directions for Rainbow Schools
Rainbow District School Board *Code of Conduct*
Administrative Procedure Student Discipline: Suspension
Administrative Procedure Student Discipline: Expulsion