



## Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour

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### Policy Statement

The Grand Erie District School Board supports a safe, inclusive, and accepting environment in which every student can reach their full potential.

The Grand Erie District School promotes positive learning environments that encourage the building of healthy relationships and appropriate behaviours. Positive learning environments are a key to the prevention of disruptions to the learning and teaching setting.

Progressive Discipline is a whole-school approach that utilizes a continuum of interventions, supports, and consequences to address inappropriate student behaviour, and builds upon strategies that promote positive behaviours.

### Accountability

1. Frequency of Reports – As needed
2. Criteria for Success –
  - Enhanced student safety
  - Effective student discipline
  - Improved student conduct
  - Improved student performance

### Statement of Guiding Principles

The Board recognizes the following principles:

- Disciplinary strategies are guided by least punitive, most enabling consequences to support a student's academic learning and promote a safe and orderly learning and teaching environment;
- Appropriate action must consistently be taken to address behaviours that are contrary to the *Grand Erie Code of Conduct* and a school's Code of Conduct;
- Each incident of inappropriate behaviour is unique in terms of situational variables. Disciplinary action in response to inappropriate behaviour will reflect consideration of mitigating factors, as required by the *Education Act* and its *Regulations*;
- The range of interventions, supports, and consequences used must be clear and developmentally appropriate, and must include learning opportunities for students in order to reinforce positive behaviours and help students make good choices;
- For students with special education needs, interventions, supports, and consequences must be consistent with the expectations in the student's Individual Education Plan; and
- Parents and community agencies are viewed as integral partners to be utilized when addressing student conduct.

## **1. Progressive Discipline and Awareness Raising**

Provincial legislation and Policy/Program Memoranda (concerning Code of Conduct, suspension/expulsion, bullying, and progressive discipline) – in conjunction with Board policies and procedures - create behavioural expectations for all persons on school property, and outline strategies to be taken to reduce incidents and impose appropriate consequences for pupils. The Human Rights Code of Ontario has primacy over provincial legislation and school Board policies and procedures, such that the Education Act, regulations, Ministry of Education Program Policy Memoranda, Board policies and procedures are subject to, and shall be interpreted and applied in accordance with, the Human Rights Code of Ontario.

Each school will develop, in consultation with school councils, a continuum of interventions, supports, and consequences to address student behaviours that are contrary to provincial and Board codes of conduct, which include, but are not limited to, inappropriate sexual behaviour, gender-based violence, homophobia, and harassment on the basis of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, colour, ethnicity, culture, citizenship, ancestry, origin, religion, creed, family status, socio-economic status, disability and/or any other immutable characteristic or ground protected by the Human Rights Code.

Consequences for inappropriate behaviour may include, but are not limited to, meetings with the parent(s)/guardian(s), student, and principal; referral to a community agency for counseling support and intervention; detentions or loss of privileges; and suspension and/or expulsion.

In considering the most appropriate response to address inappropriate behaviour, the following should be taken into consideration:

1. The particular student and circumstances (i.e., mitigating factors);
2. The nature and severity of the behaviour;
3. The impact on the school climate (i.e., the relationships within the school community); and
4. The Individual Education Plan

## **2. Progressive Student Discipline Model**

The Grand Erie District School Board endorses early and ongoing prevention and intervention to promote positive behaviour. Opportunity for students to learn from their choices is a critical element.

The Progressive Discipline Model can be described as having four levels of intervention. The level of intervention or discipline is based on the consideration of the nature, severity and impact of the misconduct and of the mitigating factors, with the goal of changing the student's behaviour. Each progressive stage represents more serious behaviour and corresponding consequences.

### **Level 1**

Level one discipline is employed for minor acts of misconduct which interfere with orderly school procedures, functions, extracurricular programs, or a student's own learning. These minor acts are addressed by the classroom teacher, educational assistant and/or ECE.

**Level 2**

Level two discipline offences are acts of misconduct that require increased intervention. These acts may include, but are not limited to, repeated unrelated acts of minor inappropriate behaviour directed against persons or property, but which do not seriously endanger the health, safety or well-being of others. Involvement of student support staff, parents/guardians and administration will support the student and assist the classroom teacher in correcting incidents of inappropriate behaviour.

**Level 3**

Level three offences requiring disciplinary intervention are serious acts of misconduct that have significant impact on the school climate, or pose threats to health, safety or property. These offences must be reported to administration immediately. Suspension may be considered by the principal as a necessary intervention. Student, parent, school and support staff communication is necessary to resolve the issue and ensure that supports are in place to meet student needs.

**Level 4**

Level four offences represent the most serious acts of misconduct and, as such, may require intrusive intervention, such as suspension pending expulsion. These acts may require the involvement of police services as per the Police and School Board Protocol.

A voluntary program for students on long-term suspension or expelled students is available for those who consent to participate. Non-academic support from community agencies will be engaged by the Grand Erie Safe Schools Team, as necessary.

**3. Reporting to Principals**

The purpose of reporting incidents of inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour is to ensure that the principal is aware of activities taking place in the school where suspension or expulsion must be considered, and to ensure a positive school climate.

Any employee of the Board who becomes aware that a student at school may have engaged in an activity for which suspension or expulsion must be considered shall report the matter to the principal as soon as reasonably possible. The employee must consider the safety of others and the urgency of the situation in reporting the incident, but, in any case, must report it to the principal no later than the end of the school day.

In cases where immediate action is required, a verbal report to the principal may be made. An electronic report, as outlined below, must be made when it is safe to do so.

Employees report incidents using the “Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part I”. Upon receipt of this form principals must provide the person who submitted the report with electronic acknowledgement on the “Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part II”. If no further action is taken by the principal, the principal is not required to retain the report, and should destroy it. Regardless of the outcome of the investigation, the principal must inform the person who submitted the incident report. (Note: The Safe Schools Incident Reporting forms can be found in policy SO10 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention. The electronic versions can be located in the staff portal.)

If the principal decides that action must be taken as a result of an incident of bullying, they will file a copy of the reporting form and documentation of the action taken in the Ontario Student

Record (OSR). The names of all other students that appear on the form – both aggressors and victims - must be removed from the form before it is filed in the student's OSR.

In the case of the victim, no information about the incident must be placed in their OSR, unless the victim or parent of the victim expressly requests this.

Third-party service providers working with students will establish procedures for reporting inappropriate student behaviours to principals.

Where the victim is also an aggressor, information about the incident and any action taken will be entered in the OSR if the principal contacts the victim's parents. Contact with parents should always be made as soon as possible.

#### **4. Responding to Incidents**

The purpose of responding to incidents of inappropriate behaviour is to stop and correct the behaviour immediately so the student involved will learn that it is not acceptable. Behaviour that is not addressed becomes accepted behaviour.

Board employees who work directly with students – including administrators, teachers and non-teaching staff (including staff in social work, child and youth work, psychology, and related areas, and educational assistants) – must respond to any student behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate, whether on or off school property.

Responding may include asking a student to stop the inappropriate behaviour; naming the type of behaviour and why it is inappropriate and/ or disrespectful; asking the student to correct the behaviour. When employees are aware that an incident involves a student with special educational needs, they are expected to respond in a way that is appropriate to that student.

Board employees are not required to respond to incidents when, in their opinion, responding would cause immediate physical harm to themselves or another person. However, for incidents for which suspension or expulsion must be considered, Board employees must report these to the principal and confirm their report electronically using the "Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part 1". For incidents where suspension or expulsion would not be considered, and Board employees feel it is not safe to respond, they will be expected to inform the principal verbally as soon as possible. For example, a Board employee would not be required to respond if it would mean having to leave a student with special needs who would be in danger if left alone.

#### **5. Support for Students**

All employees of the Board must take seriously all allegations of bullying, racism, gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment, inappropriate sexual behaviour and any other negative behaviour which would impact on the school climate. Schools are expected to support all students, including those who report such incidents, by providing them with contact information about professional supports, both Board-based and community agencies.

Principals are required to notify parents/guardians of the victim of serious student incidents unless the victim is 18 years old or over (or is 16 or 17 years of age and has withdrawn from parental control) or, in the opinion of the principal, doing so would put the victim at risk of harm from a parent. When principals have decided not to notify parents of victims, they must inform

the teacher who reported the incident. Principals shall also, if they determine it is appropriate to do so, inform other Board employees of this decision. In addition, principals must refer students to a community agency that can provide the appropriate type of confidential support when parents are not called.

When it is determined that it is necessary to separate students to preserve school safety or to protect a student, it is preferable that the victim not be moved. The Grand Erie Safe School Team will facilitate the move and transition of any students who it is determined need to change schools or school program as a result of a serious student incident.

## **6. Delegation of Authority**

In the event that the school principal is not present on school property, the principal has the authority to delegate powers, duties and functions to the vice-principal, except assigning long-term suspensions or expulsions.

In the event that there is no administrator present on school property, the principal's authority under Part XIII of the Education Act may be delegated to a teacher and must respect the terms of all applicable collective agreements. When this occurs, the principal must communicate to staff when and to whom administrative responsibilities have been delegated. The principal must also ensure that the teacher has access to Board policy, school emergency protocols and communication information for the Family of Schools Superintendent of Education.

Teachers may be delegated the authority to initially deal with situations that must be considered for suspension or expulsion. The most important consideration in these circumstances is the safety of those involved. The teacher must report all details of the initial investigation to the principal as soon as possible.

The teacher must report to the principal or vice-principal any activities that must be considered for suspension or expulsion that are received from staff or others during the principal's absence. A teacher may not be delegated authority regarding suspension decision or recommendations regarding expulsion of students.

A teacher may be delegated limited authority to contact the parents/guardians of a student who has been harmed as the result of an activity for which suspension or expulsion must be considered. The information provided to the parents/guardians by a teacher must be limited to the nature of the harm to the student and the nature of the activity that resulted in the harm.

The teacher must not be delegated the authority to discuss the nature of any discipline measures taken in response to the activity.

If the teacher is not sure whether parents should be called, the teacher should contact the principal or supervisory officer for direction. The principal or vice-principal will follow up with the parents as soon as possible.

## **7. Circumstances in Which a Principal Must Consider Whether to Suspend a Student**

A principal must consider suspending a student when the principal believes that the student engaged in any of the activities set out below while at school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate:

- Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person;
- Possessing alcohol or illegal/restricted drugs;
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- Swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority;
- Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the pupil's school or to property located on the premises of the pupil's school;
- Bullying;
- Any act considered by the principal to be injurious to the moral tone of the school; or
- Any act considered by the principal to be injurious to the physical or mental well-being of any member of the school community.

## **8. Circumstances in Which a Principal Must Suspend a Pupil Pending Expulsion**

A principal shall suspend a student when the principal believes that the student engaged in any of the activities set out below while at school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate:

- Possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm;
- Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person;
- Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner;
- Committing sexual assault;
- Trafficking in weapons or illegal/restricted drugs;
- Committing robbery;
- Providing alcohol to a minor;
- An act considered by the principal to be significantly injurious to the moral tone of the school and/or to the physical or mental well-being of others;
- A pattern of behaviour that is so inappropriate that the pupil's continued presence is injurious to the effective learning and/or working environment of others;
- Activities engaged in by the pupil on or off school property that cause the pupil's continuing presence in the school to create an unacceptable risk to the physical or mental well-being of other person(s) in the school or Board;
- Activities engaged in by the pupil on or off school property that have caused extensive damage to the property of the Board or to goods that are/were on Board property; or
- The pupil has demonstrated through a pattern of behaviour that s/he has not prospered by the instruction available to him or her and that s/he is persistently resistant to making changes in behaviour which would enable him or her to prosper.

In the event of a suspension for an activity, the principal shall conduct an inquiry to determine whether to recommend the expulsion of the student, in accordance with the *Education Act*, its *Regulations*, and applicable Policy/Program Memoranda.

**Reference**

PPM 128 – Provincial and Board Codes of Conduct

PPM 141 – Programs for Long-term Suspension

PPM 144 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention

PPM 145 – Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour