



POLICY

SO10

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Board Received: November 22, 2021 Review Date: January 2026

Policy Statement

The Grand Erie District School Board is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and accepting working and learning environment, which supports productivity and the personal goals of dignity and self-esteem of every individual, and is free from bullying.

Bullying adversely affects:

- a student's ability to learn.
- a school's ability to educate its students
- healthy relationships and school climate.

Bullying will not be accepted on school property, at school-related activities, or in any other circumstances which might impact on the school climate (e.g., online).

This policy applies to students (incidents of bullying involving Board personnel will be addressed through Policy HR5 – Harassment/Objectionable Behaviour; incidents involving visitors or parents could involve Trespass Letters or police). All employees of the board must take seriously allegations of bullying behaviour and act in a sensitive and supportive manner when responding to anyone who reports bullying incidents.

Accountability

1. Frequency of Reports – As needed
2. Criteria for Success – Enhanced student safety
 - Increased opportunity for students to continue their education
 - Improved student performance

1. Definition of 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.

Persons may attain or maintain power over others through real or perceived differences. Some areas of difference may be:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| • Size | • Ethnicity | • Religion |
| • Strength | • Disability | • Gender identity |
| • Age | • Need for special education | • Gender expression |
| • Intelligence | • Sexual orientation | |
| • Economic status | • Family circumstances | |
| • Social status | • Gender | |
| • solidarity of peer group | • Race | |

Bullying is a dynamic of unhealthy interaction that can take many forms. It can be:

- physical (e.g., hitting, pushing, tripping, etc.)
- verbal (e.g., name calling, mocking, or making sexist, racist, or homophobic comments)
- social (e.g., excluding others from a group, spreading gossip or rumours)
- and/or through the use of technology – cyberbullying (e.g., spreading rumours, images, or hurtful comments through the use of e-mail, cell phones, text messaging, Internet web sites, or other technology)

2. Prevention and Awareness-Raising Strategies

In an effort to prevent bullying within Grand Erie District School Board schools and at school and Board events, students, staff, parents/guardians, and community members are expected to adhere to the standards set out in Grand Erie's *Code of Conduct* (Policy SO12).

Each school must strive to develop a positive school climate. A school climate is defined by the Ministry of Education as "the sum total of all the personal relationships within a school."

When these relationships are founded in mutual acceptance and inclusion, and modeled by all, a culture of respect becomes the norm. A positive school climate exists when all members of a school community feel safe, comfortable and accepted.

The focus of Character Education in Grand Erie schools supports a comprehensive prevention strategy for students. These teaching strategies focus on developing self-worth, appropriate behaviours, and healthy relationships.

Opportunities for bullying prevention training and leadership initiatives are to be provided within each school. Training will address topics such as cultural sensitivity, respect for diversity and special needs.

3. Intervention and Support Strategies

Principals must ensure that students are able to report bullying incidents safely and in a way that will minimize the possibility of reprisal. Support must be provided to students who have been bullied, students who have bullied others, and students who have been affected by bullying.

Board employees who work directly with students must respond to any student behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on school climate. Such behaviour includes all inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour at school and at any school-related event. Such inappropriate behaviour may involve bullying.

A student who is engaged in bullying behaviour will be subject to a range of intervention strategies, from counselling to suspension/expulsion. Note: students under grade 4 are not subject to discretionary suspensions.

Schools must outline how they will support students who have engaged in bullying and also those who have been bullied. Specific support plans will be developed to protect students who have been harmed, and must outline a process for parents to follow if they are not satisfied with the support their children receive.

4. Reporting to Principals

The purpose of reporting incidents of inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour is to ensure that the principal is aware of any 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.

In cases where immediate action is required, a verbal report to the principal will suffice until a written report can be submitted.

All employee reports made to the principal must be confirmed electronically, 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, using 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, accordingly, the person who submitted the incident report.

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 that it be placed in the OSR.

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 must always be made as soon as possible.

5. Notifying Parents

Principals are required to notify the parents of students who have been harmed as a result of bullying behaviour. Principals are also required to contact the parents of students who have been engaged in bullying behaviour. In both circumstances, principals must:

- describe the nature of the harm to the bullied student,
- outline the nature of any disciplinary measures taken, and
- discuss support that will be provided to students.

The principal will not notify the parent of a student if, in the opinion of the principal, doing so would put the student at risk of harm.

6. Training Strategies

Grand Erie recognizes that bullying is a community problem that reflects itself in schools, and that the entire school community has a role to play in prevention and intervention. Building capacity of all school personnel is paramount in reducing bullying in all areas of Grand Erie.

Parents/guardians are viewed as an integral part of the school community and a resource in both prevention of, and intervention in, bullying incidents. Grand Erie schools will provide information to parents/guardians through a variety of sources (e.g., parent night, newsletters, pamphlets, social media) in order to best support their children and the school community as a whole.

Grand Erie will address the diversity of the school population as it relates to bullying, by providing ongoing awareness and training for school personnel. The needs of all members of the school and Board population must be considered to effectively prevent and intervene in bullying situations involving equity-seeking groups.

All annual School Improvement Plans will include a safe schools/bullying prevention component and guidelines for Safe School Teams and need to be shared with parents and school community.

As part of the School Improvement Plan, all schools will have a Safe Schools Team to address bullying prevention and to be responsible for fostering a safe, inclusive, and accepting school climate within each school. Each team will have a Chair and will consist of at least the principal, a teacher, a parent/guardian and, where applicable, a student representative.

The Grand Erie Safe Schools Team will act as a resource and support for school teams.

References:

Procedure SO10 Bullying Prevention and Intervention

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

SAFE SCHOOLS INCIDENT REPORTING FORM
— PART I —

CONFIDENTIAL

Report No:		
Name of School		
1. Name of Student(s) Involved (if known)		
2. Location of Incident (check one)	☐ At a location in the school or on school property (please specify)	
	☐ At a school-related activity (please specify)	
	☐ On a school bus (please specify route number)	
	☐ Other (please specify)	
3. Time of Incident	Date:	Time:
4. Type of Incident (check all that apply)	Activities for which suspension must be considered under section 306(1) of the Education Act for students in grade 4 or above: ☐ Threatening to inflict serious bodily harm on another person. ☐ Possession of alcohol, drug paraphernalia, illegal or restricted drugs, or cannabis, without a medical prescription ☐ Under the influence of alcohol, illegal or restricted drugs, or cannabis, without a prescription ☐ Swearing at, or in reference to, a teacher or at another person in a position of authority ☐ Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to Board or personal property on school premises or at any school-related activities ☐ Bullying, including cyberbullying ☐ Physical or verbal aggression ☐ Persistent opposition to authority ☐ Any inappropriate behaviour motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other protected human right ☐ Any act considered by the principal to be injurious to the moral tone of the school or the well-being of members of the school community Activities for which expulsion must be considered under section 310(1) of the Education Act: ☐ Possessing a weapon or replica, including a firearm ☐ Using a weapon or replica to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person ☐ Committing physical assault on another person that caused bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner ☐ Committing sexual assault	

	☐ Trafficking in weapons or illegal/restricted drugs ☐ Committing robbery ☐ Giving alcohol or cannabis to a minor ☐ Bullying, if, i. the pupil has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying, AND, ii. the pupil's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person; ☐ Any inappropriate behaviour motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other protected human right where; i. The pupil has previously been suspended for this behaviours, AND ii. The pupil's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety or mental well-being of another person. ☐ Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to Board or personal property on school premises or at any school-related activities. ☐ 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; and
5. Report Submitted By:	
Name:	
Signature:	Date:
Contact Information:	
Location:	Telephone:

SAFE SCHOOLS INCIDENT REPORTING FORM
— PART II —*ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT*

Report No.		
Report submitted by:	Name:	Date:
☐ Action Taken		☐ No Action Required
Name of Principal:		
Signature:	Date:	
Note: Only Part II to be returned to the person who reported.		