

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE # 307

BULLYING

Administrative Application	
Initiated by:	Superintendent
References:	AP #301 – School Discipline AP #302 – Harassment Intimidation, Threats, Assault AP#308 – Safe Schools AP#335 – Cyber-Bullying
Related Directives:	Education Act
Reviewed & Approved:	December 2012

Background

Yellowknife Catholic Schools is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all students attending its schools. Bullying behaviors cause emotional and mental scarring and affect an individual's self-esteem.

In order to address concerns of bullying a wide-range approach is necessary. Everyone has a role to play in ensuring that a positive school climate is developed and in preventing inappropriate behaviors that lead to bullying.

Definitions

1. *Bullying* means repeated and hostile or demeaning behaviour by a student where the behavior causes harm, fear or distress to another individual in the school community, including psychological harm or harm to the individual's reputation. Bullying occurs in circumstances where there is a real or perceived power imbalance.
2. *Conflict in Relationship* occurs through single episodic acts of breakdowns in relationship between students. Conflict is an inevitable component of students learning to grow within social relationships. Disagreement and misunderstanding between parties is at the heart of conflict. However, conflict does not constitute bullying, as it is not a premeditated effort to cause harm, fear or distress. Addressing conflict in relationship may be dealt with through counseling and the school's behavior policy.
3. *Personal Harassment* refers to unwelcome, discriminatory conduct or behavior, which is known or ought to be known to cause offense to another person. It is not a relationship of mutual consent.
4. *Sexual Harassment* refers to unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or

other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, which is known or ought to be known to impact the well-being of another person.

5. *Positive Behavior Support* is a strategy for schools to further the social responsibility and social responsiveness of students in meeting behavioral expectations in a school. PBS is based on a belief that teaching and nourishing appropriate behaviors has a far greater success than relying upon a model of consequences and punishments. This model is applied according to the age and stage of the development of the learner and is a strategy that staff may use to address bullying within a school.
6. *Sanctity of Human Life* – Foundational principles of all Catholic social teaching is the sanctity of human life. Recognizing each person as the image and likeness of God, the Catholic Church believes in the inherent dignity of the person. Human life is valued above all material possessions in the world. This is the lens through which the district advocates for the safety and well-being of students within our schools.
7. *Catholic teaching on social relationships* – Our students must respect the unique differences of every person, extending understanding and compassion to others. We do not limit or narrow our understanding of each other to specific traits that make us different. Rather, each of us is recognized for the entirety of our gifts and is called forth to contribute these gifts for the betterment of creation. God’s plan for each of us defines all of our social relationships. Our relationships, therefore, are characterized by generosity of self, mutual respect, and a desire for the good of the other.

Specifically

1. All schools and classrooms must enact procedures that support the following expectations with respect to bullying:
 - a. No action toward another student, regardless of the claimed intent of that action, will cause harm, fear or distress to that student (example: jokes, pranks, etc.)
 - b. No action will diminish a student’s reputation with the school community (example: rumours, slurs, innuendos, demeaning comments etc.)
 - c. Any action that contributes to a perception of bullying, whether it occurs during school time, or after school hours, or whether by electronic or other means, will be addressed by the school if it is determined that the actions impact the well-being of the alleged victim within the school community.
 - d. Any action that humiliates or contributes to diminishing the reputation of a student because of race, religious beliefs, color, gender, physical or mental disability, ancestry, place of origin, marital status of parents, source of income of parents, family circumstance, or sexual orientation of a student is deemed to be an act of bullying.
 - e. A staff member will ignore no report by a student that s/he is being “bullied”. The staff member will respond and deal with it as appropriate.
 - f. The administrator will establish a distinction between those matters of

bullying that will be addressed by teachers and those that will be addressed by administration.

- g. Students who are bystanders to an act of bullying have a responsibility to report observed incidences to school staff. Students are expected to either speak out to prevent the bullying behavior by labeling the behavior as bullying and requesting the behavior cease, or failing this, immediately report such incidences to school staff. Students do not have a role in disciplining students who have allegedly participated in bullying behaviors.
 - h. In establishing consequences for bullying, teachers and administrators will use corrective interventions that consider the context of the circumstance, the behavioral history of the students involved, and the age/stage of development of the students.
 - i. If in the opinion of a staff member an act of bullying has occurred, interventions will be applied to stop the behavior in the future. This will include educating the student(s) victimized about how to address the issue in the future and how to seek supports including safe intervention plans. Those disciplined for their involvement in bullying will be communicated what to “stop” doing and “start” doing in order to put an end to bullying.
 - j. Parents play a primary role in assisting with the resolution of matters pertaining to bullying. They must be apprised at the earliest of opportunity of issues in this area as they have impacted their children.
 - k. Incidents of bullying that adversely impact the safety of individuals or affect the common good of the school community can be addressed through the application of Section 35 & 36 of the *NWT Education Act*.
2. In order to enhance an overall approach to supporting safe and caring learning environments for students, schools may establish co-curricular learning opportunities where an enhanced cause for promoting respect for the human person may be established. When students, out of concern for each other, within the school or within the greater or global communities, seek to initiate this request, the following expectations will be followed.
 - a. A proposal must be presented to the principal
 - b. The principal, in conjunction with other district staff, will approve or amend the request while upholding Catholic teaching on social relationships.
 - c. The principal will ensure that there is a staff advisor.
 3. Consequences: When considering consequences for bullying behaviors, consideration must be given to the frequency, duration and intensity of the bullying behaviors.

Consequences may include: requirement for counseling and educational training, suspension, referral to the Superintendent, and/or a behavioral contract.