Administrative Procedure 351

BULLYING PREVENTION

Belief

All members of the school community have a responsibility to promote a welcoming, safe and caring environment that is free from bullying.

Guidelines

1. Bullying is willful, deliberate, repeated and hostile activity marked by an imbalance of power. There is intent to cause harm. Bullying may include, but is not limited to: physical aggression and assault; extortion; verbal or written threats; social alienation; sexual harassment including degrading comments with regard to race, gender, religion or sexual orientation; teasing, put downs and humiliation; threatening looks, gestures or actions; hurtful rumors; false accusations; or the use of technology to disseminate hurtful intentions.

2. Bullying in any form will not be tolerated in the school jurisdiction and there shall be zero tolerance for ignoring or failing to address incidents of bullying.

3. Conflict, on the other hand, is a disagreement or difference in perspective and is a normal part of social interaction. Students require support to learn how to resolve their conflicts respectfully and productively.

4. When staff becomes aware of bullying or conflict, they will firstly determine whether the situation involves bullying or conflict and then take appropriate steps to intervene in either case.

Procedures

5. Principals will ensure a school wide, common understanding of the definition of bullying as well as how it is different from normal conflict. Principals will ensure that the definitions of bullying and conflict are clearly communicated to staff, students and parents.

6. Principals are to ensure that preventive measures are in place to create a positive learning environment:

   6.1 At the beginning of each school year, students shall be informed that bullying behavior is not acceptable and that they are encouraged to inform teachers, the principal or their parents if they experience bullying or become aware that students are being bullied.
6.2 Through the school opening newsletter, the student handbook and other home/school communications, parents will be requested to inform school staff when they become aware of bullying incidents occurring in the school community.

6.3 School-wide programming shall be implemented that aims at the enhancement of healthy relationships, the development of pro-social skills and the prevention of bullying.

7. Principals will ensure that corrective measures are in place to deal with bullying and that supportive measures are in place to assist students to deal with normal conflicts.

8. Principals shall ensure that all incidents of bullying are investigated fully. Such reviews should take into account knowledge of previous behavior and may involve interviews with students, parents, and school staff. It may also be necessary to peruse school records; contact previous schools attended, and identify relevant family matters.

9. Each incident of bullying will involve some level of corrective action depending upon the frequency, and severity of the bullying behavior. In every case, those assigning such corrective action will exercise fairness, common sense and appropriate discretion. Where possible, corrective actions to bullying should be interventions that repair the harm that has been done through restitution or restorative practices.

10. If high risk behaviors are exhibited, Administrative Procedure 335: Risk/Threat Assessment Protocol may be activated.

Reference: Section 12, 1(1)(b.1) School Act