

Christ the Teacher Catholic Schools

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

SECTION:	300 - STUDENTS	CODE:	AP 349
PROCEDURE:	BULLYING BEHAVIOR IN SCHOOLS		

*Blessed are the peacemakers;
for, they shall be called the children of God.*

Matthew 5:9

BACKGROUND

Bullying is one form of harassment occurring in schools and, as such, warrants particular emphasis by Division staff. The effect of bullying behaviour by students or staff is highly destructive, limiting significantly the right of every person to learn and work in a safe and supportive setting. Peers who witness bullying are an essential part of any intervention plan.

Successful interventions by all members of the school community requires a commitment to promoting a school environment where bullying is discouraged and where everyone is actively encouraged to take a stand against bullying by supporting those who are bullied or harassed.

The Canadian Public Health Association in partnership with the Canadian Initiative for the Prevention of Bullying (National Crime Prevention Strategy) offers a free toolkit to Canadian schools to measure school-peer relationship problems, standards for quality programs, and a common set of tools to assess the impact of school-based programs.

Definition

Bullying is generally identified as a form of aggressive behavior that is repeatedly directed at an individual or group from a position of relative power. Bullying behavior can take many forms. It can be physical (e.g., hitting, pushing, tripping, threatening looks, gestures), verbal (e.g., name calling, insults, put-downs), social (e.g., social isolation, gossip), or cyber (threats, insults, or harmful messages spread through the internet). Bullying can be direct, “in your face” confrontation, or indirect, “behind your back”, such as spreading rumours. Bullying can be done by one person or a group. It can occur in interactions between students, between staff and students or between members of staff. A child or young person being bullied feels helpless in trying to stop it.

A student is bullied or harassed when he or she is intentionally and repeatedly the target of the negative actions of a stronger or more powerful person or group that cause fear, emotional stress and/or physical harm.

PROCEDURES

1. Bullying in any form is not tolerated in the Division, and it is expected that when system staff observe an act of bullying, they will take immediate, appropriate steps to intervene.
2. At the beginning of each school year students shall be informed that bullying behaviour is not acceptable and encouraged to inform teachers, the Principal or their parents when they experience bullying by their peers or by adults in the school or become aware that other students are being bullied. This expectation is to be reinforced repeatedly throughout the school year.
3. Through the school opening newsletter, the school handbook and other home/school communications, parents shall be requested to inform school staff when they become aware of bullying incidents occurring in the school community.
4. Incidents of bullying between members of the staff are to be reported to the Principal. Additional incidents may be reported directly to the Director.
5. All reports of bullying are to be investigated fully by school and/or system staff. Such reviews are to take into account knowledge of previous student behaviour 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 issues.
6. Each occurrence of bullying will involve some level of intervention depending on the frequency and severity of the bullying behaviour. In every case, those assigning such sanctions will exercise fairness, common sense and appropriate discretion. Where possible, a response to bullying is to include interventions that address restitution, resolution and reconciliation (see AP Appendix 349.1 – Bullying Interventions).
7. When bullying behaviour escalates, procedures identified in Administrative Procedure 354 – Threat Assessment Protocol may be required.
8. Programming shall be implemented system wide that provides for the prevention of bullying and enhances the building of healthy relationships.
9. When bullying of students occurs or is reported the following steps will be taken:
 - 9.1 The in-school administration, teachers, and support staff will respond by providing a clear message that bullying will not be tolerated.
 - 9.2 All instances of bullying are to be reported to the in-school administration and the classroom teacher(s) directly involved with the students.
 - 9.3 The in-school administration or classroom teacher(s) will listen, investigate, offer support and determine the appropriate course of action.
 - 9.4 A bullying incident report will record those involved and the action taken and will be filed with the in-school administration.
 - 9.5 In a timely fashion, the classroom teacher(s) will communicate with the in-school administration and, if appropriate, contact the parent/caregivers of each student involved informing them of the incident and how it is being handled.

- 9.6 The classroom teacher(s) will monitor the action plan, keep the in-school administration and parents/caregivers informed and update the filed report if the incident has been resolved.
- 9.7 When efforts to stop the bullying are unsuccessful, the in-school administration or the classroom teacher(s) will request separate meetings with parents/caregivers of each child involved and suggest further supports and consequences to resolve the problem.
- 9.8 The in-school administration will follow Division procedures when consequences for bullying involve suspensions or expulsions, or when follow-up includes a referral to mental health or child protection professionals or the police.
- 9.9 The in-school administration has a responsibility to support the individual or parent in making a decision to involve the police when the incident may qualify as a criminal offence and to follow Division protocols for such involvement.
- 9.10 The in-school administration and school staff have a responsibility to report cases of bullying to the police when students' or school staffs' safety is at risk or when they witness an incident of bullying that qualifies as a criminal offence.

Reference: Sections 85, 87, 108, 109, 152, 153, 154, 155, 175, 193 Education Act

Date Issued: November 21, 2007