

Student Harassment and Bullying

The St. James-Assiniboia School Division affirms its commitment to maintain a learning environment that is free from harassment and at all times supports the dignity and self-esteem of students. Harassment of any individual will not be tolerated. An individual who believes she/he is being harassed or bullied should report the incident immediately, following the procedures herein set forth.

- I. Consistent with the Manitoba Education document *A Whole-School Approach to Safety and Belonging: Preventing Violence and Bullying*, harassment is defined as a persistent act or comment that is hurtful, degrading, humiliating, or offensive.

II. Bullying

The Division believes that bullying can be a serious problem that when occurring requires prompt and accurate intervention. For that reason, bullying has been included in this policy. Complaints involving bullying of students will be addressed according to the procedures outlined in this policy. Bullying is defined as unfair and one-sided aggression towards another person and may include physical, verbal, social, or written aggression (including electronic communication such as social media, text messaging and email), isolation or intimidation. It often involves an imbalance of power and strength and results in the target person feeling humiliated and/or distressed. Bullies generally hurt, threaten, and/or frighten others in a repetitive, intentional way. However, severe objectionable conduct will be considered harassment whether it happens once or more than once. Such behaviour includes, but is not restricted to:

- a) Physical aggression: hitting, kicking, taking or damaging personal property
- b) Social aggression: spreading rumours or gossiping, excluding or isolating someone from a group, avoiding or ignoring
- c) Intimidation: exerting control over another by instilling fear through words or actions and when repeated over time, is a form of bullying
- d) Verbal aggression: name calling, teasing, ridiculing or threatening, making intimidating phone calls
- e) Written aggression: hurtful, threatening notes (either signed or anonymous)

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- f) Cyber-bullying: is bullying by means of any form of electronic communication, including social media, text messaging, instant messaging, websites or email.
- g) Hate speech: Any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, disseminated offline or online, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with references to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor.

III. Complaint Procedure

Any student who believes that she/he, or any parent, or school employee or any other person in charge of students during school approved activities who believes that a/his/her child, is being harassed or bullied within the definitions as just outlined, should act promptly in order to resolve the situation by using the following procedures:

- a) Complaints are to be made directly to the Principal or designate
- b) Once the complaint is received, a prompt and confidential investigation will be made by the Principal or designate
- c) The Principal or designate will endeavour to resolve the matter and in doing so may:
 - Take appropriate disciplinary action where such is found to be warranted
 - Inform the complainant and the person against whom the complaint has been lodged of the outcome of the investigation
 - Take disciplinary action against the complainant if through the investigation, the Principal or designate finds that there were no grounds for the complaint and that it was done willfully and maliciously.

IV. Consequences of Policy Violation

Where it is found that a violation of the policy has occurred, the following procedures are in place:

- a) Disciplinary Action
Appropriate disciplinary action by the Principal or designate to redress the situation which includes notification that continuation or repetition or conduct found to be in violation of this policy will be cause for further action; and/or

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b) Disciplinary Directive

A directive from the Principal or designate, or Superintendent/CEO or designate, which specifies certain behaviour with which the party (ies) must comply. Failure to comply will result in further action up to and including expulsion.

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