Greater Essex County District School Board

Policy: Safe Schools

Reference No: P-AD-16

The Greater Essex County District School Board is committed to creating and promoting a safe environment in its schools and Board properties for staff, parents/guardians, visitors, volunteers and the community. Safety of students is a primary concern of the GECDSB. It is important that all students have a safe, caring and accepting school environment in order to maximize their learning potential and to ensure a positive school climate for all members of the school community. All school staff play a critical role in building and sustaining a positive school climate.

Every member of the school community has a responsibility to assist in creating and maintaining safe, secure, and harmonious learning, teaching, and work environments. All members of the school community have a role in leadership and modeling of appropriate behavior. To that end, the GECDSB supports the local Police % School Protocol.

This policy authorized the creation of procedures for implementation, which shall be considered guidelines pursuant to the Education Act.

Corresponding GECDSB Regulations:

- R-AD-28 Code of Conduct
- R-AD-29 Bullying Prevention and Intervention
- R-AD-30 Progressive Discipline
- R-AD-37 Delegation of Authority Regarding Student Discipline
- R-AD-51 Suspension and Expulsion
- R-AD-08 Student Searches

Greater Essex County District School Board

Regulation: Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Reference No: R-AD-29

Bullying is one of the activities listed in the *Education Act* that leads to possible suspension. As such, bully must be reported to the Principal by all Board employees, teaching and non-teaching.

Principals are required to inform parent(s)/guardian(s) of students who have been harmed as a result of bullying if the student is under 18 years of age, or is 16 or 17 years of age, and has not withdrawn from parental control.

Principals will initiate support for students, as well as their parent(s)/guardian(s), who are victims of serious incidents.

Definitions:

"Bullying" means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a student where,

a) The behaviour is intended by the student to have the effect of, or the student ought to know that the behaviour would be likely to have the effect of,
   i. Causing harm, fear or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, or social or academic harm, harm to the individual's reputation or harm to the individual's property, or
   ii. Creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, and the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the student and the individual based on factors such as size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, disability or the receipt of special education; ("intimidation")

For the purpose of the definition of "bulling", behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

a) Bullying included bullying by electronic means (commonly known as cyber bullying), including,
   i. Creating a web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
   ii. Impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet; and
   iii. Communicating materials electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.

Students may attain or maintain power over others in the school through real or perceived differences. Some area of difference may be physical size, strength, age, intelligence, economic status, social status, solidarity of peer group, religion, ethnicity, disability, need for special

education, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender identity, gender expression, and race among other things.

Bullying is a dynamic of unhealthy interaction that can take many forms. It can be physical (e.g. hitting, pushing, tripping), verbal (e.g.name calling, mocking, or making sexist, racist, or homophobic comments), or social (e.g. spreading rumours, images, or hurtful comments through the use of e-mail, cellphones, text messaging, internet website, or other technology).

Bullying Prevention is whole school approach that heightens expectations for a safe, caring and inclusive school climate. It includes a shared understanding about the nature and underlying causes of bullying and its effects on the lives of individual students and the school community.

Bullying Intervention is a comprehensive and effective response to the bullying incident that takes inconsideration all parties involved in the bullying incident. It should provide specific supports for the student who has been bullied, intervention for the student who was bullying, and strategies for responding to students who were directly observing the bullying incident.

Positive School Climate is the sum total of all the personal relationships within a school. When these relationships are founded in mutual acceptance and inclusion, and modelled by all, a culture of respect becomes the norm. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable, and accepted. To help achieve a positive environment, boards and schools should actively promote and support positive behaviours that reflect their character development initiatives. They should also endeavour to ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) and members of the broader community are involved in the school community.

Serious incidents are those activities for which a suspension or expulsion must be considered and are listed in sections 306 and 310 of the Education Act. Bullying was added to the list of infractions for which suspension must be considered (s. 306 Education Act).

Monitoring and Review

The Board has established a system wide Bullying Prevention and Intervention Committee (BPIC) to evaluate the effectiveness of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention regulation and procedures. The BPIC will establish indicators in consultation with teachers, non-teaching staff, students, parent(s)/guardian(s), school councils, Special Education Advisory Committee, Greater Essex County District School Board Parent Involvement Committee, and other appropriate service providers in the community. The anonymous school climate surveys that are to be completed every two years will incorporate these indicators.