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Ted Doherty, Director of Education and Secretary of the Board

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Mitchell District High School

The *Education Act* requires school boards to develop a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and to require all of its schools to implement the plan.

This document is intended to facilitate the School's implementation of the Board's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, with a view to promote a school-wide approach to ensuring a safe, inclusive and accepting school environment free of bullying, harassment, discrimination, and other inappropriate behaviours.

The Board's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is based upon the Ministry of Education's Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (the "Model Plan") released January 29, 2013, and the requirements set out in this document have been taken directly from the Model Plan.

EDUCATION, AWARENESS AND OUTREACH

The School recognizes that a whole-school approach to engaging the school community will help the School's efforts to address inappropriate behaviour.

To this end, the School will utilise the following Ministry of Education definition of bullying in communications with the school community:

Bullying - means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a pupil where,

a) the behaviour is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil 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, 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
b) the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the pupil 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 purposes of the definition of "bullying" above, behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

Cyber-bullying

For the purposes of the definition of "bullying" above, bullying includes bullying by electronic means (commonly known as cyber-bullying), including,

a)   creating a web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
b)   impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet; and
c)   communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.

In its communication efforts, the School will:
- "Identify different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying.
- Understand the myths and realities of bullying behaviour.
- Identify bullying and differentiate bullying from conflict, aggression and teasing.
- Understand power and peer dynamics.
- Identify how biases, prejudice and hate can lead to bullying.
- Identify different manifestations and underlying factors of bullying, such as body image, racism, sexism, homophobia, disability, etc.
- Understand a whole school approach and the essential importance of a positive school climate for student achievement and well-being.
- Develop awareness and understanding of the factors that contribute to a safe, inclusive, caring and accepting school climate.
- Identify ways to make students aware of how they can help prevent and address bullying.
- Identify strategies to engage parents in conversations about bullying prevention and how to promote a positive school climate.
- Reach out to parents and the broader school community
- Reflect on relationships and interactions and focus on promoting healthy relationships using a variety of strategies.
- Become knowledgeable about community partners and resources available in the community."

The School will also communicate and share with the school community, procedures including the Board/school Code of Conduct, equity and inclusive education policy and guidelines for religious accommodations, procedures to address incidents of discrimination, progressive discipline approach, and bullying prevention and intervention plans and strategies."

The School will endeavour to increase education, awareness and outreach by using the following best practices:

Bully Button: Our website has a reporting button where students may anonymously share issues they are facing. Information is reviewed as it comes in by school administration and subsequently shared with the Safe Schools Team as needed.

Safe Schools Team: Our team will analyse student perceptual data (safe schools survey; friendly feast conversations; student voice opportunities; COMPASS Survey) and provide staff with in-service to review student perceptions of their school environment. The team will provide input into next steps for safe-school activities.

Community Health Nurse: Our partnership with the Perth District Health Unit allows MDHS to have a health nurse on site each week to provide student support and counselling. Students may see the nurse at the request of the student or their parents/guardians or may be referred by staff. The health nurse refers students to additional support agencies as needed.

Our nurse presents to students on a variety of social issue throughout the year including the maintenance of positive relationships. She also supports administration in providing counselling for both the bullied and the bully.

Community Officer: Our community officer presents to students on a variety of legal issues throughout the year, with a particular focus on bullying and cyber-bullying. In addition, his/her strong positive relationship with students increases student reporting of inappropriate behaviour, and his/her position on our Safe Schools Team gives us a unique perspective on prevention and intervention practices.

Collaborative Problem Solving: School administration received training in September 2012 on Ross Greene's Collaborative Problem Solving model. Administration will work with staff and students to improve our communication and therefore understanding of the root of ongoing incidents, to identify lagging student skills and ensure the execution of plans for skill development.

Equity Walks: Our staff participates in equity walks to ensure that our practices are sensitive to and inclusive of the many elements of diversity in our community as well as globally.

Progressive Discipline: As per AMDSB Administrative Procedure 352, we are committed to maintaining a safe, caring, accepting and inclusive school climate through positive preventative practices and interventions, as well as progressive discipline for inappropriate behaviour.

MDHS Equity Team: This student-led and staff-supported team identifies issues related to equity, diversity and inclusion that may cause students to feel marginalized, and addresses them through multi-media campaigns, activities, presentations and training.

Guest Speakers/Presentations: Presentations will address the issues of feeling excluded due to SES, appearance, and ability.

The School has identified the following strategies to engage parents in conversations about bullying prevention and how to promote a positive school climate:

Our bullying prevention plan is shared with staff at meetings during our Safe Schools and Equity & Inclusive Education presentations

The plan is shared with parents through School Council and posted on our website

School Council Presentations

Bullying prevention school assemblies are also advertised and open to the community

Open and prompt communication with parents of all students involved in bullying issues

Develop a resource bank of literature materials for classroom use with characters who are marginalized, have disabilities, or experience identifiable challenges and engage in dialogue with students to identify issues, biases, discrimination, etc. and how to address these in today's context.

EVALUATION OF EVIDENCE

The School recognizes that effective anti-bullying strategies must be evidence-based.

The School will base its bullying interventions, strategies, practices and programs on evidence from the school climate surveys and other relevant information. The school will take the following steps to assess anti-bullying initiatives and strategies:
- o Evaluate the evidence to determine the main areas of concern, and identify issues in the physical environment, determine current procedures, and assess the strategies in place based on results of the school climate surveys and other student perceptual information.
- o Monitor children and youth involved in bullying (including the bully, the person being bullied, and those who may have witnessed or been affected by the bullying) for self-reported improvement of specific bullying situations. The School will consider using a risk assessment approach in this process.
- o Review and update the School's strategies as a result of gathering new information and share with the school community

Pre-evaluation strategy
The School's main issues of concern raised by students, staff and parents in the school climate surveys and based on other relevant information are the following:

- ■ Frequency of other students being bullied every week- 3.3% physically, 7.2% verbally, 6.3% socially, 5.3% electronically

- ■ 23.5% of students say bullying occurs often in school hallways.

- ■ Where bullying occurs- 31.6% sometimes electronically, 13.1% often electronically, 9.6% always electronically

- ■ 60.5% say their reason for feeling unwelcome at school has to do with appearance.

- ■ 21.8% say their reason for feeling unwelcome at school has to do with family income

- ■ 47.1% say their reason for feeling unwelcome at school has to do with school marks

- ■ 13.1% of students indicate they have did not report bullying or harassment the last time they saw it.

- ■ 5.3% of students say they are verbally bullied every week and 0.7% say they are bullied

multiple times a week because of their sexual orientation.

The School's concerns raised in respect of the physical environment are:

There are no concerns related to the physical environment.

The School's current processes for reporting, response, support and following up on issues are as follows:

1. Reporting: Bully Button
2. Classroom: open planned discussion of respectful and supportive behaviour as well as of difficult student situations increases the acceptance of openly sharing incidents of unkind behaviour in a timely manner to prevent bullying (the "aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a pupil").
3. Responses/Support: We support a team approach with all involved students promoting responsible, accountable talk, restitution, commitment to change and commitment to report further incidents immediately.
4. School Support Services such as those listed below provide support as required through staff referrals or student requests.   These support personnel also provide connections to additional services as required.
   a. Community Officer
   b. Student Services Counsellor
   c. Youth Unlimited Counsellor
   d. Perth District Health Nurse
   e. Addictions Counsellor
5. Student intervention training is provided for school leaders.

Based on a review of the school climate survey results and other relevant information, the following areas have shown success/ improvement:

- 0% indicate they don't want to get involved or it is not their problem when a student is bullied.
- 80% find MDHS friendly and welcoming.
- 86% of students feel accepted by adults.
- 79% of students feel that adults treat them the same as everyone else.
- MDHS is an accepting environment as reported by students and staff.

Based on the school climate surveys and other relevant information, areas requiring improvement are as follows:

- Inclusion of all students and feeling valued by peers
- Respectful student-to-student verbal communication

Based on the above, the School proposes the following action plan to address areas of concern:

To increase student awareness of discrimination and bullying

To raise awareness among staff of the bullying/discrimination issues faced by students.

To raise awareness among staff of the similarities and differences between their perception of the types of bullying/discrimination issues faced by students versus those being reported by students.

To improve inclusion programming to meet the needs of all students in the regular classroom.

Utilize literacy materials that include protagonists that deal with exclusion/acceptance due to appearance, abilities, or poverty.

Post-evaluation Strategy

The School will reassess the results of subsequent school climate surveys to verify the efficacy of the anti-bullying initiatives implemented. The "post-evaluation phase gathers evidence to test the efficacy of the prevention, responses, interventions or supports provided in order for changes to be made, where necessary."

Upon re-evaluation, the School will update the information in this Template to reflect the effectiveness of its anti-bullying initiatives.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The School recognizes that a whole school approach and a strong policy and legislative framework are important for bringing widespread change.

The School also recognizes that the goals of policy initiatives must address the areas of challenge identified in school climate surveys and other relevant data. The board has created the following Administrative Procedures to support schools in addressing positive school climates: 141 *Equity and Inclusive Education*, 351 *Code of Conduct*, 325 *Promoting Positive Student Behaviour*, 353 *Student Suspension*, 352 *Student Expulsion*, 355 *Student Dress Code*, and 357 *Violence Free Schools*.

The School will actively communicate its procedures and guidelines to the school community (including involving the school community in the review and/or development of procedures and guidelines relating to bullying, discrimination and harassment), by taking the following steps:

Our bullying prevention plan is shared with parents through School Council and is posted on our school website.

The roles/responsibilities of the school community (students, staff, parents, and community members) are as follows:

Students:
- Follow the code of conduct of the school,
- Treat all members of the school community with acceptance and respect,
- Report all incidents of bullying to staff and cooperate with staff in addressing any bullying that may occur at the school or outside of school, and
- Complete the school climate survey when it is issued every two years.

Staff:
- Enforce the code of conduct consistently and fairly,
- Actively teach students appropriate behaviour for interacting with peers and adults,
- Model appropriate behaviour for interacting with others,
- Teach students through a variety of means what bullying is and that it is not acceptable behaviour,
- Teach students what to do should they be the target of bullying behaviour or should they witness other students engaging in bullying behaviour,
- Support students who have been the target of or witness to bullying behaviour,
- Support students who have engaged in bullying behaviour in order to help them develop more positive ways of interacting with their peers,
- Apply progressive discipline as outlined in Administrative Procedure 352 *Promoting Positive Student Behaviour*, and
- Complete the school climate survey when it is issued every two years.

Parents:
- Become familiar with the school code of conduct,
- Learn the definition of bullying and the various forms in which it can present itself,
- Work with the school staff to educate their children on appropriate behaviour for interacting with other children and adults,
- Model appropriate behaviour for interacting with others,
- Report incidents of bullying to school staff as soon as possible to assist staff in dealing with the matter quickly,
- Support school staff in implementation of bullying prevention initiatives, restorative practices and progressive disciplinary measures, and
- Complete the school climate survey when it is issued every two years.

Community Members:
- Become familiar with the school initiatives to promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere,
- Provide resources that complement the initiatives being undertaken by students, staff and parents to address bullying within the school and the community, and
- Report incidents of bullying to school staff as soon as possible to assist staff in dealing with the matter quickly.

PREVENTION

The School recognizes that fostering a positive learning environment will help to reduce possible bullying, harassment, and discrimination incidents. The School is committed to taking steps to strengthen prevention measures.

The roles and responsibilities of the safe and accepting school team (which will be communicated with the school community) are as follows:

- As a team examine School Climate Data Survey and last year's Bullying Prevention Plan
- Highlight areas of concern and focus for this school year
- Create and implement strategies to improve areas of concern
- Review and reflect on strategies and their impact on school culture

Based on its evidence-based analysis, the School has identified the following practices and initiatives for bullying prevention (as divided by categories set out in the Model Plan):

a) bullying prevention and intervention programs or activities that are evidence-informed and that address the needs identified by the Board or the School:

- Homeroom teacher discussion of discrimination, bullying and cyber- bullying and the explicit teaching of the use of the Bully Button
- Assemblies on topics of body image, SES, dis/abilities, and bystander intervention
- Student-led campaigns to promote the acceptance and celebration of diversity in our school and greater community.

b) relationship building and community building programs that are present in the school, classroom and in the larger community:

- Grade 7 school orientation
- Our Blue-Bud peer mentoring program

c) activities that promote a positive school climate:

- Announcements and tweets focusing on quotes about diversity, inclusivity, bullying and reporting
- Website reporting and promotion of positive school climate
- Course reading selections and related discussions

> ■ Public art activities connected to equity and peace

d) awareness raising strategies for students, e.g. social emotional learning, empathy, developing self-regulation skills:

> ■ Curricular use of readings related to social justice in our community, country, and world
> ■ Open classroom discussion

e) awareness raising strategies to engage community partners and parents in early and ongoing dialogue:

> ■ Community Peace Tree Ceremony
> ■ Newspaper articles
> ■ Website articles
> ■ Presentations from school support agencies
> ■ Twitter and Website advertising of school initiatives and programming

f) ways to link curriculum and daily learning:

> ■ Homeroom teachers discuss discrimination, bullying, and the importance of responding and reporting any of the above behaviours as well as explicitly demonstrate the use of the Bully Button
> ■ Reading material and assignments incorporating character education traits and their development
> ■ Section in library on character education

g) ways to support and encourage role modeling by caring adults and student leaders within the School and school community:

> ■ We Day 2016 for Student Council
> ■ Equity Team activities
> ■ Student panels at staff meetings to share concerns
> ■ Student representation on all school committees
> ■ Peer mentor/mentee trips to build team and leadership skills as well as build strong, positive relationships for student support

The School has also identified the following learning and training opportunities for school staff and the school community that are needed:

> ■ Safe Schools Team presentations at staff meetings

> ■ Presentations at staff meetings and PD Days to address current inclusion issues

The School will also:
- o provide opportunities for regular check-ins with students at risk or affected by bullying;
- o provide opportunities for teachers to development effective classroom management strategies using progressive discipline;
- o establish and maintain respectful and caring classrooms; and,
- o align supervision plan to address where and when bullying happens, as identified through climate surveys.

INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES

The School recognizes the importance of using timely interventions and supports with a school-wide approach.

To this end, the School will:
- o use teachable moments within a progressive discipline approach to address inappropriate behaviour, and consider mitigating and other factors;
- o have in place processes and strategies to identify and respond to bullying when it happens;
- o identify strategies for supporting all students involved in bullying;
- o communicate the progressive discipline approach to the school community and the procedures in place to support the student.

The School supports the use of the following evidence-informed interventions and support strategies in a timely manner and using a whole school approach:

> ■ Ross Greene Collaborative Problem Solving
> ■ Threat Assessment Protocol
> ■ Progressive Discipline as per AMDSB Procedure 352
> ■ School Support Services and related referrals
>
> - Student Services Counsellor
> - Community Officer
> - Youth Unlimited Counsellor
> - Perth District Health Nurse
> - Addictions Counsellor
> - CCAC mental health nurse referrals