Simcoe County District School Board

STUDENT WELFARE 4200

SAFE, INCLUSIVE AND ACCEPTING SCHOOLS 4240

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1. Rationale

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) recognizes that every school should be a place that promotes responsibility, respect, civility, and academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment. A whole-school approach, which involves all members of the school community, is also important in supporting efforts to ensure that all schools are safe, inclusive and accepting. All students, parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, and staff members have the right to be safe, and to feel safe, in their school community. With this right comes the responsibility to contribute to a positive school climate (The Provincial Code of Conduct).

A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included, and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions. The promotion of strategies and initiatives such as student success and character development, along with the use of prevention and intervention strategies to address inappropriate behaviour, fosters a positive climate that supports student achievement and the well-being of all students. Schools should focus on prevention and early intervention as the key to maintaining a positive school environment in which students can learn and teachers can teach. The Provincial Code of Conduct sets clear standards of behaviour.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) play a critical role in the education of their children and in supporting their social, emotional and academic growth. Students, families and schools face complex and challenging issues that often require board supports and collaboration with external agencies to access resources that contribute to positive outcomes for all students and families.

2. Policy

It is the policy of the SCDSB to endeavour to provide safe, inclusive, learning environments including bullying prevention and intervention to support a positive school climate and a culture of mutual respect.

3. Definitions

3.1 Bullying - aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a student where;

3.1.1 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;

3.1.1.1 causing harm, fear, intimidation 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 creating a negative environment at a school for another individual;

3.1.2 the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived imbalance of power between the students 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; and,

3.1.3 bullying behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

3.2 In contrast to bullying, conflict is generally a disagreement or difference in opinion between peers who typically have equal power in their relationships. It's usually an inevitable part of a group dynamic and both parties have power to influence the situation.

3.3 Cyber-bullying includes bullying by electronic means, including;

3.3.1 creating a web page, blog, or using a social medial vehicle, in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;

3.3.2 impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet; and,

3.3.3 communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.

3.4 Mitigating and Other Factors

Mitigating and other factors must be taken into account when responding to and addressing inappropriate student behaviour.

3.4.1 Specific mitigating factors include:

3.4.1.1 the student's ability to control their behaviour;

3.4.1.2 the student's ability to understand the consequences of their behaviour; and,

3.4.1.3 whether the student's continuing presence in a school creates an unacceptable risk of safety to others.

3.4.2 Other factors include:

3.4.2.1 the student's history;

3.4.2.2 whether a progressive discipline approach has been used with the student;

3.4.2.3 whether the activity was related to any harassment of the student because of their race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or to any other harassment;

3.4.2.4 how the suspension or expulsion would affect the student's ongoing education;

3.4.2.5 the age of the student;

3.4.2.6 in the case of a student for whom an individual education plan has been developed; and,

3.4.2.6.1 whether the behaviour was a manifestation of a disability identified in the student's individual education plan;

3.4.2.6.2 whether appropriate individualized accommodation has been provided; and,

3.4.2.6.3 whether the suspension or expulsion is likely to result in an aggravation or worsening of the student's behaviour or conduct.

3.5 Progressive Discipline

A progressive discipline approach promotes positive student behaviour, combining prevention and intervention strategies and discipline with opportunities for students to continue their education. Inappropriate student behaviour is addressed using a continuum of developmentally sound and appropriate interventions, considering mitigating and other factors. There is a progressive application of consequences that may include, but is not limited to, a conversation with student and/or parent(s)/guardian(s), office referral, community service, withdrawal of privileges, detention, peer mediation, restorative practices, counseling, suspension and expulsion.

3.6 Restorative Practice

Restorative practice responds to student behaviour by focusing on repairing harm experienced by others and rebuilding relationships. This practice is used as part of progressive discipline to build, strengthen and help restore healthy relationships (Adapted from *Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario: Supporting Students with Special Education Needs through Progressive Discipline, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2010*).

4. Provincial Code of Conduct

4.1 The Provincial Code of Conduct applies to all stakeholders associated with the SCDSB including, but not limited to, students, parent(s)/guardian(s), volunteers, visitors, staff, board and committee members and are included in this policy whether they are on school property, on school vehicles or at school authorized events or activities, or in other circumstances that could have an impact on the school climate.

4.2 This policy also applies to community user groups using SCDSB facilities.

4.3 All members of the school community, especially individuals in positions of authority, are to be treated with respect and dignity.

5. Guidelines

5.1 Responsible citizenship involves appropriate participation in the civic life of the school community. Active and engaged citizens are aware of their rights, but more importantly, they accept responsibility for protecting their rights and the rights of others.

5.2 Members of the school community have a responsibility to maintain an environment where conflict and differences can be addressed in a manner characterized by respect and civility.

5.3 Members of the school community are to use non-violent means to resolve conflict.

5.4 The safety of individuals in the schools is promoted.

5.5 SCDSB schools will work cooperatively with police and other agencies to promote prevention strategies and, where necessary, will take appropriate action in response to those who are in possession of, or under the influence of alcohol, illegal and/or restricted drugs.

5.6 All members of the school community shall prevent bullying in schools.

5.7 Standards of Behaviour

5.7.1 Respect, Civility and Responsible Citizenship – All members of the school community **must** abide by the SCDSB Code of Conduct which is found in section 3 of SCDSB Administrative Procedures Memorandum (APM) A7630 – Code of Conduct. This section of the APM is shared annually with families and is available on the SCDSB website.

6. Administrative Procedures

The Director of Education is authorized to establish administrative procedures to implement this policy, which shall be considered guidelines pursuant to the *Education Act*.

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