



POLICY 7420
**WEAPONS, VIOLENCE, BULLYING AND
INTIMIDATION**

Adopted: 1998-05-26	Reviewed: n/a	Amended: 1999-01-26 2010-01-12 2018-04-10
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POLICY

SUBJECT: **WEAPONS, VIOLENCE, BULLYING AND INTIMIDATION**

The Board shall consider any act of violence, intimidation, bullying or any other instance that affects the operation of the school, whether on school premises, school organized or sanctioned activities, or in the vicinity of the school, to be a serious threat to the school environment and to the safety of both students and staff.

The Board shall consider the possession or use of any weapon by anyone on or near school premises to be a serious threat to the school environment and to the safety of both students and staff.

The Board supports all reasonable and fair measures taken by staff to prevent and respond to acts of bullying. All schools will offer proactive programs to inform and educate students and parents about bullying.



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REGULATIONS

SUBJECT: **WEAPONS, VIOLENCE, BULLYING AND INTIMIDATION**

Definitions

Violence means the attempted or actual exercise by a person of any physical force so as to cause injury, and includes any threatening statement or behaviour which gives reasonable cause to believe there is a risk of injury.

Intimidation is a form of aggression which takes place over a period of time, where one or more individuals subject a victim to fear, bullying, or harassment of a physical or psychological nature.

Bullying is a pattern of repeated aggressive behavior, with negative intent, directed from one child to another where there is a power imbalance. Bullying is any pattern of persistent unwelcome or aggressive behaviour intended to make others uncomfortable, scared or hurt. Individuals use this as a means to gain power and control by taking advantage of and disparaging those they target based on appearance, culture, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Schools must be vigilant and be aware that some bullying behaviours breach the Canadian Criminal Code and law enforcement needs to be involved.

Bullying can generally be divided into four different categories:

Physical bullying: includes tripping, pinching, pushing or damaging property.

Verbal bullying: includes name-calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks or verbal abuse.

Social, Emotional and Relational Bullying: use of behaviours instead of fists to deeply hurt others and is often harder to recognize and can be carried out behind the bullied student's back. It is designed to harm a person's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Social, emotional and relational bullying includes:

- lying and spreading rumours,
- negative facial or physical gestures, menacing or contemptuous looks,
- playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate,
- mimicking unkindly,
- encouraging others to socially exclude someone, and
- damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance.

Relational aggression includes physical aggression, taunting, harming others through damaging their peer relationships and social isolation. Boys can exhibit this behaviour, but relational aggression is more often seen in girls, specifically in “girl bullies.”

Relational aggression is learned at an early age and is generally seen in children who feel lonely and depressed. It is not linked with socioeconomic status.

Targets of relational aggression are socially and emotionally at risk, due to constant harassment. The harassment can be direct and involve intimidation in front of peers, or it can be indirect and involve intimidation through social media sites and email. Either way, it is constant.

Children who are the frequent targets of relational aggression feel rejected, depressed and submissive; and often see no resolution of the situation.

Cyber-Bullying: Cyber-bullying is overt or covert bullying behaviour using digital technologies. Examples include harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces. Cyber-bullying can happen at any time. It can be in public or in private and sometimes is only known to the target and to the person perpetuating the bullying.

Cyber-bullying has changed the traditional face of bullying in schools in three significant ways – Access, Scope and Anonymity (ASA).

Access: It is virtually impossible for targets to get away from cyber-bullies. Most students have access to all types of technology; cyber-bullies have access to and can reach their targets almost all the time. Targets do not have a safe haven as they do in cases of traditional bullying.

Scope: Unlike traditional bullying, due to technology, the cyber-bullying audience has few – if any – barriers, and the audience easily grows almost exponentially.

Anonymity: Cyber-bullying is not a face-to-face interaction and cyber-bullies hide behind technology. Anonymity, which is inherent in electronic communication, promotes a lack of inhibition. As a result, normal behaviour restraints can disappear, allowing adolescents to act harsher than they would in real life.

Cyber-bullying is the newest phenomena of the four types of bullying; information and trends on this type of bullying are ever-changing (given the pace of technology and the younger age at which students are introduced to the Internet.) Often digital technologies will be combined with social, emotional and relational bullying to socially assassinate the character of a student and to isolate him/her from peers.

A **weapon** is:

- i) anything that is used, or can be used, or is designed to put someone in fear; or
- ii) anything used or intended for use in causing injury and/or death to persons whether designed for that purpose or not; or
- iii) anything used, or intended for use, to threaten or intimidate any person and,

without restricting the generality of the foregoing, includes any replica weapon or firearm as defined in section 84 of the Criminal Code.

1. Statements concerning Board policy on weapons, violence, bullying and intimidation shall be included in the Codes of Conduct published by each school.
2. Administrators who reasonably believe that an act by a student is violent or intimidating shall:
 - i) make all reasonable attempts to minimize the risk of injury and/or death to any member of the school community;
 - ii) take appropriate disciplinary and/or remedial action in accordance with the circumstances and seriousness of the offense.
3. Where there is a reasonable belief that a person on or near school premises is in possession of a weapon on his or her person, or in any other place, that administrator shall, as expeditiously as possible:
 - i) make reasonable attempts to minimize the risk of injury and/or death to any person;
 - ii) arrange for the removal of weapons from the school premises;
 - iii) notify the RCMP immediately, if that action is deemed appropriate;
 - iv) ensure that appropriate disciplinary and remedial action is taken;
 - v) notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of any student(s) involved;
 - vi) notify the Superintendent of Schools/designate.

4. Intimidation

The Board of Education will not tolerate any form of intimidation including intimidation caused by the selection/formation of school teams. The Board expects that:

- i) Principals and teachers will attempt to ensure that practices involving the formation of school teams, both in-class and out-of-class will be inclusive of all students.
- ii) A fair and equitable selection of school teams will be implemented whether it be by teacher selection or random selection.

5. Enforcement

Administrators, teachers and support staff are responsible for the enforcement of this policy as is appropriate for their roles.