

SECTION 6: OPERATIONS

Policy 6.49.03: Protecting Student Well-Being through Bullying Prevention and Intervention

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Approved by Board Resolution #028-2008 01 29

Revised by Resolution #094-2014 05 27

Revised by Resolution #039-2021 03 30

Revised by Resolution #059-2022 06 14

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Algoma District School Board that bullying, including cyberbullying, is a serious issue and will not be tolerated in the school environment (including virtual), on school property, at school-related activities, on school transportation, or in any other circumstances that resulting in a negative impact on the school climate. Bullying adversely affects a student's well-being and ability to learn, and adversely affects the school climate, including healthy relationships.

All staff of the Algoma District School Board shall be committed to:

1. Creating schools which are safe, inclusive and accepting of all pupils.

2. Encouraging a positive school climate and preventing inappropriate behaviour, including bullying, sexual assault, gender-based violence and incidents based on homophobia, transphobia or biphobia.
3. Addressing inappropriate pupil behaviour and promoting early intervention.
4. Providing support to pupils who are impacted by inappropriate behaviour of other pupils.
5. Establishing disciplinary approaches that promote positive behaviour and use measures that include appropriate consequences and supports for pupils to address inappropriate behaviour.
6. Providing pupils with a safe learning environment.

Definition(s)

For the purposes of developing and implementing Board policy and school-level procedures on bullying prevention and intervention, the following definition of **bullying** will apply:

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

Cyber-bullying

For the purposes of the definition of "bullying" in subsection (1), bullying includes bullying by electronic means (commonly known as cyber-bullying), including,

- (a) *creating a web page, blog, app or any social media posting 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, app or other social media platform that may be accessed by one or more individuals.*

Bill 13 Accepting Schools Act 2012

Aggressive behaviour may be intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect. Bullying is a dynamic of unhealthy interaction that can take many forms.

- Physical bullying includes, but is not limited to hitting, pushing, tripping, chasing, destroying or stealing belongings, and unwanted sexual touching.
- Verbal bullying includes, but is not limited to name calling, mocking, sarcasm, teasing, spreading rumours, threatening, unwanted sexual comments, and making negative references to one's culture, ethnicity, race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.
- Social bullying includes, but is not limited to excluding others from a group, mobbing, scapegoating, humiliating others with public gestures intended to put them down, and spreading gossip or rumours.
- Cyber-bullying is the act of engaging in bullying behaviours through electronic means such as social media platforms, email, text or direct messaging, digital gaming and/or communication applications. Examples of cyber-bullying may include:
 - Sending or sharing hateful, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating electronic communication or images via text messages, emails, direct messages;
 - Revealing information considered to be personal, private, and sensitive without consent;
 - making and/or engaging, and/or participating in fake accounts on social networking sites to impersonate, humiliate and/or exclude others; and
 - excluding or disrupting access to, a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts and during digital gaming sessions.

Harm may be experienced in a number of ways, including physical, mental, emotional, and psychological.

1. *ADSB Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan*

All members of the school community shall uphold the Standards of Behaviour as outlined in the [Provincial Code of Conduct](#) and [Board Policy](#).

Schools shall utilize the Algoma District School Board Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, as outlined in the administrative procedures, to establish school-level procedures that outline bullying prevention and intervention strategies.

The ADSB Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be reviewed every two years.

2. *Engaging Parents/Guardians and Families*

The ADSB Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be posted on the board's website and shared by schools with parents/guardians. Information about bullying prevention and reporting, and protocols to follow when not satisfied with a school response, will be posted on the board's website. Board staff will periodically work with community partners to plan bullying information sessions for parents/guardians.

3. *Notifying Parents*

Principals or staff designated by the Principal shall notify the parents/guardians of students involved in bullying (e.g. bullies, victims, bystanders) as soon as reasonably possible and invite the parents/guardians to discuss supports for their child.

4. *Prevention and Awareness Raising*

Daily classroom and school-wide teaching strategies will include a focus on developing healthy relationships, school-wide bullying prevention strategies, and promoting the 12 attributes identified in the ADSB Character Development Initiative. Learning opportunities will include the development of healthy relationships by including bullying prevention strategies and highlighting equity and inclusive education principles in daily classroom instruction and school activities. Opportunities will be made available for staff and students to learn to recognize the various forms of bullying and understand the actions that can be taken by those witnessing the behaviour. Opportunities will be made available for students and staff to participate in equity and inclusive education, bullying prevention, and leadership initiatives within their own school.

5. *Programs, Interventions, and Other Supports*

Intervention and support will be consistent with a progressive discipline approach. Ongoing intervention and support may be necessary to sustain and promote positive student behavior. Board employees who work directly with students – including administrators, teachers, and non-teaching staff (including educational assistants, staff in social work, child and youth work, psychology, and related areas) – must respond to any student behavior that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate. Such behavior includes all inappropriate and disrespectful behavior at any time at school and at any school-related event if, in the employee's opinion, it is safe to respond to it, in accordance with subsection 300.4 of Part XIII of the [Education Act](#) and Ontario Regulation 472/07. Such inappropriate behavior may involve bullying.

6. *Reporting to the Principal*

Any employee of the board and other non-board employees who come into direct contact with students on a regular basis (i.e. bus drivers, community agency representatives, parent volunteers, coaches etc.) who become aware that a student is engaging in bullying, will respond to the behavior and shall report the matter to the principal, as soon as reasonably possible, but no later than the end of the school day, so that appropriate actions to address the incident and protect the student may be taken. If a bullying incident is violent, the principal must notify police and complete a Violent Incident Report.

7. *Suspensions and Expulsions for Bullying*

Actions taken by the principal in response to bullying incidents will align with Policy 6.49.02 – Progressive Discipline Policy for Students Including Suspension and Expulsion.

8. Professional Development Strategies for Administrators, Teachers, and Other School Staff

The Algoma District School Board will provide training for all teachers and other staff related to resources, strategies and procedures related to bullying prevention and intervention.

9. Communication and Outreach Strategies

The Algoma District School Board will openly communicate its policy, intervention and prevention strategies as well as the definition of bullying to students, parents/guardians, teachers and other school staff, school councils, volunteers, school bus operators/drivers, and Board committees (e.g. Parent Involvement Committee, Special Education Advisory Committee, Indigenous Education Advisory Council). The ADSB Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be posted on the Board's website and shared by schools with parents/guardians.

10. Monitoring and Review

All instances of reported bullying will be tracked and monitored to guide and inform school and board strategic planning. The Algoma District School Board will conduct school climate surveys on a two-year cycle. Students, school staff and parents/guardians will have an opportunity to participate in the survey. Reported bullying data and the survey will be used to provide data for each school to conduct an analysis of school climate as well as to provide indicators for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's bullying prevention and intervention strategies. Reported bullying data and school climate survey data will also be used to monitor, review and evaluate the effectiveness of the ADSB Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

11. School Well-Being Teams

Each school must establish a School Well-Being Team responsible for fostering a safe, inclusive and accepting school climate. Other school committees and teams (e.g. healthy schools, equity, safe and accepting schools, etc.) may be incorporated into the School Well-Being Team.

12. Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the Board, including Board staff and volunteers, students and parents/guardians of students under 18 years of age to follow this established policy and the Administrative Procedure for Student Bullying Prevention and Intervention.