Holy Name Catholic School

Promoting Positive School Climate and Well-being

Updated - Fall 2023

Algonquin & Lakeshore
Catholic District School Board

Preamble

The ALCDSB is dedicated to creating and promoting positive school climate and well-being in all of our schools. Respecting the dignity of all persons by fostering trusting relationships through policies and practices that promote equity, inclusion and diversity are at the core of our Catholic values, the Board's spiritual theme of *Formed in the Faith* and our provincial *Catholic Graduate Expectations*. A positive school climate is directly linked to student success and well-being ensuring students are motivated to do well and will realize their full potential. We are committed to sustaining healthy and nurturing communities of belonging that are safe, caring and respectful and built on the principles of restorative practice and progressive discipline.

The ALCDSB and its school communities engage in a whole school approach in putting prevention and intervention strategies in place to facilitate a positive relationship between students, staff, parents and community partners.

I. Education, Awareness, and Outreach

Holy Name Catholic School (the "School") proclaims that all people are created in the image and likeness of God and, as such, have the right to be treated with dignity, respect and fairness. The school further recognizes that a whole-school approach to engaging the school community will help the School's efforts to address inappropriate behaviour.

To these ends, the School will utilise the Ministry of Education definition of bullying in communications with the school community:

In its communication efforts, the School will:

- Make known that a positive school climate is essential for student achievement and well-being.
- Identify the factors that contribute to a safe, inclusive caring and accepting school climate.
- Support relationship building and focus on promoting healthy relationships using a variety of strategies.
- Educate parents and students regarding the differences between bullying, conflict, aggression and teasing.
- Explore and identify the underlying factors that contribute to conflict and/or bullying.
- Work in partnership with parents and the broader school community to build awareness about the resources and pathways available.
- Be responsive to parental concerns and continue to build relationships and resiliency.

Holy Name Catholic School (the "School") will communicate and share with the school community, policies and 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 promoting positive school climate and well-being."

1. The School will endeavour to increase education, awareness and outreach by using the following best practices:
   - A whole-school approach to creating a safe and caring school;
   - Religious and Family Life Education curriculum focused on building relationships;
   - Class and whole school prayer services and/or liturgies;
   - Community Presentations (Community Police Officer, Public Health Nurse);
   - Opportunities for student voice & leadership (Learning Buddies, Eco Club, Lunch Time Helpers, Recess Helpers);
   - Ongoing communication with the school community through School Messenger system and Weekly Updates, and
   - Celebration of Board Theme "Blessed Beyond Belief."

2. The School has identified the following strategies to engage parents in conversations about promoting a positive school climate:
   - Parent representation on the Caring and Safe Catholic Schools Team;
   - Principal will inform Catholic School Council (CSC) of the Caring and Safe Catholic Schools Team and School's Plan (which will be posted on the school website);
   - Updates at CSC Meetings about events/activities happening in the school that support wellness, positive mental health, positive school climate and accepting school cultures, and
   - Up-to-date school website, X formerly known as Twitter & School Messenger (including Friday Updates to Families) as means of communication.

II. Evaluation of Evidence

Holy Name Catholic School recognizes that effective prevention strategies must be evidence-based. The School will base its 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 prevention initiatives and strategies:

- 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 relevant information.
- Identify 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). The School will consider using a risk assessment approach in this process.
- Review and update the School's strategies as a result of gathering new information.
- Share the updated strategies with the school community.

Pre-evaluation strategy

1. 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:
   - Ensuring that students can report incidents of bullying and conflict safely and in a way that minimizes the possibility of reprisal;
   - Ensuring that ALL students feel that they have a "safe and caring adult" to turn to in times of need;
   - Provide methods for student voice so that concerns and issues can be heard;
   - Use a trauma-informed approach;
   - Provide proactive authentic opportunities for student to further learn about relationships, restorative practices and dealing with conflict;
   - Ensure a common language is understood and used by students, parents, and staff.

2. The School's areas of focus with respect to the physical environment are:
   - Ensure the supervision of students inside the school and on school property;
   - Ensure that students are aware of safe school procedures (fire, lockdown, etc.);
   - Flexible seating in classes and the Learning Commons (LC), and
   - Safe spaces (LC, Sensory Room, Sensory Path, quiet spaces in classrooms etc.).

3. The School's current processes for reporting on, responding to, supporting, and following up on issues are as follows:
   - Use of the Board's *Caring and Safe Catholic School Administrative Procedures;*
   - Use of the Holy Name Catholic School progressive discipline approach;
   - Creation and implementation of Behaviour Support Plans and/or Safety Plans as needed;
   - Student Case Conferences as required;
   - Use a trauma-informed approach;
   - Team Approach, especially with students with special education needs, and
   - Regular communication via variety of modes (classroom communication book, class newsletters, Friday Family Updates, X formerly known as Twitter, etc.)

4. Based on a review of the school climate survey results and other relevant information, the following areas have shown success/improvement:
   - Empathy, self-esteem and optimism;
   - SIPSAW priorities that promote mental health and well-being practices/indicators;
   - Restorative practices and Social-Emotional-Learning programs, and
   - School-based initiatives which highlight our board theme of "Blessed Beyond Belief."

5. Based on the school climate survey and other relevant data, the School proposes the following action plan to address areas requiring improvement:
   - YW will work collaboratively with classes (E.g., Everyday Speech, Minds Up, Fun Friends, Zones, Kids have Stress Too, Social Groups, Roots of Empathy etc.);
   - Share results of MDI with stakeholders to build awareness of needs and strengths, and
   - Build awareness and knowledge of mental well-being and daily mindfulness.

Post-evaluation Strategy

The School will reassess the results of subsequent school climate surveys to verify the efficacy of the positive 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 bullying prevention initiatives.

III. Policies and Procedures

The School recognizes that a whole school approach and the policies and procedures of ALCDSB are important for promoting positive school climate and well-being.

The School also recognizes that the goals of policy initiatives must address the areas of challenge identified in school/Board climate surveys and other relevant data.

1. The School will actively communicate its policies, procedures and guidelines to the school community (including involving the school community in the review and/or development of policies, procedures and guidelines relating to Caring and Safe Catholic Schools, by taking the following steps:
   - Holy Name Code of Conduct is shared with families, reviewed with staff and then reviewed it with the junior/intermediate classes in September 2023, and
   - Our School Code of Conduct and Promoting Positive School Climate and Well Being Plan are posted on school website, and
   - On-going review of school expectations with staff, students and families from a proactive/asset lens of "In Support of Student Safety in the School, WE need you to…"

2. The roles/responsibilities of the school community (students, staff, parents, and community members) are as follows:
   - To follow the standards of behaviour as outlined in the Code of Conduct, and
   - To participate in a whole-school approach to positive school climate in order to ensure that schools are safe, inclusive, and accepting. The Ministry of Education Provincial Parent Guide link: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/code.pdf.

IV. 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.

1. The roles and responsibilities of the Caring and Safe Catholic Schools Team (which will be communicated to the school community) are as follows:

- Team members are responsible for addressing issues and areas of concern identified in the School Climate Surveys and other related data;
- Review and update our school's Promoting Positive School Climate and Well Being Plan yearly, and
- Seek Board or Agency Supports if necessary.

2. From its evidence-based analysis, the School has identified the following practices and initiatives for promoting positive school climate and well-being:

a) Bullying prevention and intervention programs or activities that are evidence-informed and that address the needs identified by the Board or the School:
- School wide Resiliency Project - Resiliency Building Blocks Initiative;
- Student-led Events: United Way Campaign Spirit Week, Terry Fox Walk, Eco Club, Lunch Time Helpers, Recess Helpers, and
- Everyday Speech and other programs offered by YW/educators.

b) Relationship-building and community-building resources that are present in the school, classroom and in the larger community:
- Promoting connections to safe and caring adults;
- Peer assistance and mentoring programs;
- Support from the Parish (school-parish connection);
- Youth Workers, and
- Mental Health and Addictions Nurse.

c) Activities that promote a positive school climate:
- School-wide focus on gospel values and Catholic Graduate Expectations;
- School wide Resiliency Project - Resiliency Building Blocks Initiative;
- School-wide social justice and charity initiatives (Jingle Bell Walk - St. Vincent de Paul, Chalice, Terry Fox);
- Spirit Weeks/Days;
- Support by Lunch Supervisors, Recess Helpers and Learning Buddies;
- ECO Club and other student lead clubs or committees;
- Community Events (Open House & BBQ, Halloween Dance, Chili Fest), and
- School sports teams.

d) Awareness-raising strategies for students, e.g. social-emotional learning, empathy, developing self-regulation skills:
- Restorative Practices;
- School Improvement Goals around well-being, caring, and inclusivity, and
- Mindfulness training/Everyday Speech.

e) Awareness-raising strategies to engage community partners and parents in early and ongoing dialogue:
- Discussions with Staff, Caring and Safe Catholic Schools Team and Catholic School Council;
- Community Representation on Catholic School Council;

- Sharing of school activities through school website, X formerly known as Twitter, and School Messenger (including Family Updates on Friday);
- Partnership, when available with Community Policing Officer that includes parent and student presentations, and
- Electronic and print media.

f) Strategies for linking curriculum and daily learning for promoting positive school climate and well-being:
- School-wide focus on restorative practice as a whole-school approach;
- School wide Resiliency Project - Resiliency Building Blocks Initiative;
- Board pastoral theme is incorporated in class lessons, prayer services, and school activities;
- Well-being and mental health integrated in class lesson and activities, and
- Outdoor learning opportunities (Frink Outdoor Centers, forest walks, Take me Outside Day).

g) Strategies to support and encourage role modeling by caring adults and student leaders within the School and school community:
- Peer assistance and mentoring programs;
- Support from Community Partners, and
- Informal opportunities

3. The School has identified the following learning and training opportunities for school staff and the school community that are needed:
- Community Resilience initiative (CRI) Trauma Informed Training and support from members of the Teach Resilience Team;
- Promoting Positive School Climate and Well-being pamphlet for parents (available at the Board's website www.alcdsb.on.ca), and
- BMS and PACE training as needed.

V. Interventions and Support Strategies

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

1. To this end, the School will:
- Communicate the progressive discipline approach to the school community and the procedures in place to support the student (outlined in School Code of Conduct);
- Use teachable moments within a progressive discipline approach to address inappropriate behaviour, and consider mitigating and other factors;
- Restorative Practices are in place to support prevention and intervention practices;
- Have in place processes and strategies to identify and respond to bullying and conflict when it happens;
- Teach and promote Gospel values in keeping with our Board Pastoral Theme and Catholic values and teachings, and
- Refer for extra support when needed (Board level SATs, Mental Health Lead).

2. The School supports the use, in a timely manner and using a whole school approach, of the following evidence-informed interventions and support strategies:
   - Use a trauma-informed approach;
   - Restorative practices;
   - Discussions with Youth Worker, Board SAT's and Mental Health Lead;
   - School Case conference with parents and educators, and
   - Referral to external services (Maltby, family physician, Kids Inclusive).

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.