



Promoting Positive School  
Climate and Well-being



## **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 *Faith in Action* 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**

St. Peter Catholic 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.

St. Peter Catholic 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 through our focus on our Catholic virtues, “Good News” announcements, MindUp program, and resiliency building skills;
  - Religious and Family Life Education curriculum focused on building relationships;
2. The School has identified the following strategies to engage parents in conversations about promoting a positive school climate:
  - Parent representation on Caring and Safe Catholic Schools Team - each school has a team;
  - Discussions with School Council regarding the results of our school climate survey, school code of conduct, as well as growth mind set and resiliency building strategies.

## **II. Evaluation of Evidence**

St. Peter 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 addressed by the following:
  - Ensuring that students, parents, and staff have a common understanding of bullying and positive conflict resolution strategies.
  - Ensuring that students can report incidents of bullying safely and in a way that minimizes the possibility of reprisal.
  
2. The School's areas of focus with respect to the physical environment are:
  - Ensuring supervision of students inside the school and on school property.
  - Ensuring students, parents, and staff are knowledgeable of our school rules and permitted areas both inside the school and on school property.
  
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*;
  - Students and parents will inform staff of issues.
  - Staff will respond to all reported information in a way that supports the needs, development, and rights of all students involved.
  - Supports may involve Board personnel and/or community agencies.
  
4. Based on a review of the school climate survey results and other relevant information, the following areas have shown success/improvement:
  - Students feeling that they have someone at school who consistently provides encouragement and can be turned to for advice.
  - Students feeling that they have someone at home or in their community who consistently provides encouragement and can be turned to for advice.
  - Students feeling teachers are responsive to their needs and encourage independence with a democratic approach.
  - The school staff emphasizes academic skills and hold high expectations for all students to succeed.

5. Based on the school climate survey and other relevant data, the School proposes the following action plan to address areas requiring improvement:
  - Staff will discuss problems and reinforce positive conflict resolution strategies during morning meetings and restorative justice circles.
  - Continue to include elements of the school's code of conduct in monthly newsletters.
  - Ensure students, parents, and staff have a common definition of bullying and awareness of our school's policy through regular and on-going communication.

#### **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:
  - School Code of Conduct is at the front of all students' agendas.
  - Ministry of Education Provincial Parent Guide;
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. The code of conduct is located at the front of each child's agenda.
  - 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 identified in the School Climate Surveys and other related data.
  - Team members attend in-services and work with school staff to implement strategies.
  - Team members share information at Catholic School Council meetings.
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:
    - Responsive Classroom morning meetings.
    - MindUp program to build students' resiliency and self-advocacy.
  - b) Relationship-building and community-building resources that are present in the school, classroom and in the larger community:
    - Promoting connections to caring adults;
    - Peer assistance and mentoring programs;
    - Bi-monthly pastoral visits;
    - Youth Workers;
    - Mental Health and Addictions Nurse
    - Peer Helpers
  - c) Activities that promote a positive school climate:
    - School-wide focus on gospel values, virtues, & Catholic Graduate Expectations
    - School-wide social justice and charity initiatives
    - Spirit Weeks
    - Best Buddies Program

- d) Awareness-raising strategies for students, e.g. social-emotional learning, empathy, developing self-regulation skills:
    - Roots of Empathy
    - Best Buddies
    - MindUp program
  
  - e) Awareness-raising strategies to engage community partners and parents in early and ongoing dialogue:
    - Presentation to Caring and Safe Catholic Schools Team and School Council on results from School Climate Surveys
    - Regular communication through monthly newsletters, school website, & Twitter.
  
  - 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 focus on the Catholic virtues;
    - Curriculum planning through the lens of our Catholic faith.
  
  - g) Strategies to support and encourage role modeling by caring adults and student leaders within the School and school community:
    - Catholic Student Council;
    - Peer assistance and mentoring programs;
    - Weekly staff prayer.
3. The School has identified the following learning and training opportunities for school staff and the school community that are needed:
- Annual training promoting positive school climate and well-being;
  - Promoting Positive School Climate and Well-being pamphlet for parents (available at the Board's website [www.alcdsb.on.ca](http://www.alcdsb.on.ca));

## 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:
  - Use teachable moments within a progressive discipline approach to address inappropriate behaviour, and consider mitigating and other factors;
  - Have in place processes and strategies to identify and respond to bullying when it happens;
  - Restorative Practices are in place to support prevention and intervention practices;
  - Communicate the progressive discipline approach to the school community and the procedures in place to support the student.
  
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:
  - Restorative practices;
  - Discussion with Board Social Worker (Mental Health Leader);
  - Referral of students to school Youth Worker;
  - Referral of students to the Board Mental Health and Addictions Nurse;
  - Supporting students by working with outside agencies such as Children's Mental Health, Kinark, Counseling Services of Belleville and District, Community Living, etc.



**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.