



Anti-Bullying and Anti-Violence Plan

2022-2023

School: St. Mary's School



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ABAV Committee Members: Sara Chahal (Vice-Principal)

St. Mary's Teachers

St. Mary's Special Education Technicians

St. Mary's Attendants

St. Mary's Daycare Educators

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Definition of Bullying and Violence

Bullying

The word “bullying” means any repeated direct or indirect behaviour, comment, act or gesture, whether deliberate or not, including in cyberspace, which occurs in a context where there is a power imbalance between the persons concerned and which causes distress and injures, hurts, oppresses, intimidates or ostracizes.

Violence

The word “violence” means any intentional demonstration of verbal, written, physical, psychological or sexual force which causes distress and injures, hurts or oppresses a person by attacking their psychological or physical integrity or well-being, or their rights or property.

Elements of the AB/AV Plan

- Element 1** An analysis of the situation prevailing at the school with respect to bullying and violence;
- Element 2** Prevention measures to put an end to all forms of bullying and violence, in particular those motivated by racism or homophobia or targeting sexual orientation, sexual identity, a handicap or a physical characteristic;
- Element 3** Measures to encourage parents to collaborate in preventing and stopping bullying and violence and in creating a healthy and secure learning environment;
- Element 4** Procedures of reporting, or registering a complaint concerning, an act of bullying or violence and, more particularly, procedures for reporting the use of social media or communication technologies for cyberbullying purposes;
- Element 5** The actions to be taken when a student, teacher or other school staff member or any other person observes an act of bullying or violence;
- Element 6** Measures to protect the confidentiality of any report or complaint concerning an act of bullying or violence;
- Element 7** Supervisory or support measures for any student who is a victim or bullying or violence, for witnesses and for perpetrator, (and bystander);
- Element 8** Specific disciplinary sanctions for acts of bullying or violence, according to their severity or repetitive nature, and;
- Element 9** The required follow-up on any report or complaint concerning an act of bullying or violence;

School Portrait

Analysis

An analysis of the situation prevailing at the school with respect to bullying and violence is conducted each year by using the following indicators:

- Results from the latest *Our School Survey* (formerly *Tell Them From Me*). This is a survey that measures student perceptions, which may differ from concrete quantitative data

School Portrait

Student population:

375 students presently attend St. Mary’s School (from 4-year old kindergarten to Grade 6). The school is also home to 3 regional program groups: *SAIL* (Kindergarten and Grade 1 students with global developmental delays) and *LINKS* (Cycle 2 group and Cycle 3 group for students with disruptive behavioural disorders). Our special needs students are integrated into our regular classrooms.

The decile rank of the low-income cut off is 9. Our decile rank of socio-economic background is 8. As such, we depend heavily on certain government measures and initiatives such as the Breakfast Club of Canada.

In addition, we work in close collaboration with external services such as CISSS Montérégie-Est (the Integrated Health and Social Service Center for the Eastern Montérégie region) including CLSC’s (Local Community Service Centers), the DYP (Department Youth Protection), rehabilitation centers, etc.

Other pertinent information:

The community of St. Mary’s Elementary is multicultural. The majority 32% of our students speak English at home with approximately 38% living in bilingual (English and French) homes, whereas 30% of students do not come from English speaking homes. That being said, this diversity also brings some challenges that must be addressed on a daily basis.

Feel safe at school as well as to and from school
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The student perception of feeling safe at/to and from school scored at 38%. This breaks down as 42% of girls and 37% of boys feeling safe at school or traveling to and from school.
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Bullying and Exclusion

According to the survey, 68% of students claim that they were not victims of bullying. Of this percentage, 73% were girls and 65% were boys.

Students with a positive sense of belonging

61% of our students feel accepted and valued by their peers. Of these, 53% are girls and 67% are boys.

Students with positive relationships

St. Mary's students meet the Canadian norm when it comes to having positive relationships at school with a score of 75%. 79% of girls and 73% of boys have friends at school that they trust and who encourage them to make positive choices.

Students who perceived moderate to severe anxiety

61% of students do not experience moderate or high levels of anxiety at school, of which 53% are girls and 70% are boys.

Other pertinent data

72% of students, be it 56% of girls and 79% of boys, participate in school sports. This level of participation is on par with the Canadian norm of 72%, albeit for 68% for girls and 76% for boys.

Priorities

We feel that we need to further foster the positive relationships that students have reported in order to address the perceived issues that were reported that fall below the Canadian average:

- feeling safe at school (38% of students felt safe, national average is 64%)
- positive sense of belonging (61% feel accepted and valued by peers, national average is 77%).

To address the area(s) of concern, the following preventative measures aimed at putting an end to all forms of bullying and violence; in particular those motivated by racism or homophobia or targeting sexual orientation, sexual identity, a handicap or a physical characteristic include:

1. Observation of “Orange Shirt Day” (Day for Truth and Reconciliation).
2. Observation of “ Pink Shirt Day” (anti-bullying)
3. Adherence to the Sexual Health Education program at all levels, which include conversations on varying family structures, sexual identity, stereotypes, etc.
4. High ratio of supervisors during recesses.
5. BMS (Behaviour Management System) training offered to groups of staff members.
6. Various pedagogical sessions offered throughout the year
7. Campaigning the City of Longueuil to add a crossing guard by the school
8. House System to promote sense of belonging

The success of this plan depends on the understanding and support of all of our stakeholders. School administrators and staff play a key role in developing programs and strategies to improve daily school life. Students also have a responsibility to promote and support positive behaviours. Parents are equally important and necessary partners in this initiative. Parents are encouraged to be active advocates for their children and to be aware of changes in their behaviours and to contact the school when behaviours at home become a concern.

The following measures are aimed at encouraging parents to collaborate in preventing and stopping bullying and violence and in creating a healthy and secure environment.

1. The School's Code of Conduct will be communicated with the parents (agenda, curriculum night, bulletins/memos, and/or on school website).
2. The ABAV Plan will be explained and made available to parents/guardians; it will be posted on the school website, under the tab ABAV.
3. Ongoing communication between principal and / or their designate and parents of children who are being bullied and those who are engaging in bullying behaviours until the resolution of the situation. Periodic communication with students who are bullied and their parent(s) to ensure that measures taken have been successful and the bullying has ceased.



Element 4

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING

The school will take the necessary measures to ensure confidentiality for all parties.

An incident of bullying and/or violence can be reported verbally (in person or by phone) or in writing (by email or by letter addressed to school administration). Students who wish to write a note to report an incident are encouraged to include their name for follow up.

Staff members who receive a report must document the information and submit the information to administration for follow up.

When parents have been told about a bullying situation or an act of violence, they are expected to communicate with the school principal, an alternate administrator or the classroom teacher. The report will be documented. Following the investigation, the parent should be contacted and advised that the situation has been investigated and appropriate action has been taken. Details are divulged so as to maintain confidentiality.

Element 5

INTERVENTION PROTOCOL

Our school is committed to providing a safe, caring and positive climate. Adult indifference is not-tolerated. School personnel must report and/or investigate all incidents of bullying and take appropriate action whether they personally observe incidents or learn of them by some other means. Reporting, investigation and action must occur even if the victim does not file a formal complaint or does not express overt disapproval of the incident.

This *Intervention Protocol* establishes practices and procedures for observed and reported incidents of bullying and/or violence.

For purposes of this Protocol, “*Conduct*” may include:

- Physical acts, such as inappropriate, unwanted, uninvited, or injurious physical contact with another; stalking; sexual assault; and destruction or damage to property of another;
- Written and electronic communication of any type that incorporates language or depictions that would constitute bullying, using any medium (including, but not limited to, cell phones, computers, websites, electronic networks, instant message, text messages and emails);
- Verbal threats made to another, including blackmail, extortion or demands for protection money;
- Direct or indirect, relationally aggressive behaviour such as social isolation, rumor spreading, or damaging someone’s reputation;
- Any of the above conduct which occurs off school grounds when such creates, or can reasonably be expected to create, a substantial disruption in the social setting and/or at school-sponsored activities and events.

In addition to the conduct described above, examples of conduct that may constitute bullying or violence include the following:

- Blocking access to school property of facilities;
- Stealing or hiding or otherwise defacing books, backpacks or other personal possessions;
- Repeated or pervasive taunting, name-calling, belittling, mocking putdowns, or demeaning humour relating to a student’s race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, religion, disability, or other personal characteristics, whether or not the student actually possesses them, that could reasonably be expected to result in the disruption of school activities or that results in a hostile educational environment for the student.

Conduct that would **not** ordinarily be considered bullying or violence includes:

- Teasing
- “Talking trash”
- Trading of insults
- The expression of ideas or beliefs that are protected by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, so long as such expression is not lewd, profane, or intended to intimidate or harass another.

STAFF RESPONSE PROTOCOL

Any staff members who witness an act of bullying or violence must intervene immediately or as quickly as reasonably possible to address the issue.

1. The immediate safety and security of all parties must be ensured.
2. All incidents of bullying / violence must be reported to the principal, in a timely fashion.
3. A bullying/violence incident must be documented.
4. The school principal or their designate must investigate all reports in a timely fashion, preferably within 24 hours (when possible) of receiving initial report.
5. The staff person responsible for investigating the report about the behaviour should:
 - a) Interview student(s) exhibiting bullying behaviour and the target / victim(s) separately to avoid further victimization of the target.
 - b) Engage the target / victim first and focus on his/her safety.
 - c) Reassure him / her that the bullying behaviour will not be tolerated and that all possible steps will be taken to prevent a reoccurrence.
 - d) Offer the victim counselling (if needed).
 - e) Inform parents of the incident and subsequent intervention. (Details of the intervention or disciplinary actions are not to be shared in order to protect confidentiality).

STUDENT RESPONSE PROTOCOL

Any student who witnesses an act of bullying or violence has an obligation, as a responsible member of the school community, to intervene if the situation does not threaten their well-being, or to report the incident to school authorities.

The following are the means through which a student may do so:

- Inform a staff member on duty.
- Inform administration.
- Mention it to a teacher or staff member they trust.
- Tell parent/guardian.

PARENT / GUARDIAN RESPONSE PROTOCOL

- Report the incident to a school administrator or classroom teacher.

***At the discretion of the principal or his/her delegate, police intervention may be requested.**

Element 6

MEASURES TO ENSURE AND PROTECT CONFIDENTIALITY

Measures to protect the confidentiality of any report or complaint concerning an act of bullying or violence shall include:

1. Staff is reminded that every incident and the ensuing follow-up must be kept confidential. This is done at least once each year.
2. Reports of bullying and / or violence are recorded on a digital database that has restricted access.
3. Use of intervention strategies that protect the anonymity of persons who report or provide information.

It is the responsibility of every adult staff member to use difficult / challenging situations as opportunities to help students improve their social and emotional skills, accept personal responsibility for their learning environment, and understand consequences for poor choices and behaviours.

A clear distinction exists between *remediation* and *consequences*.

- a) **Remediation**, intended to counter or “remedy” a behavioural mistake, can be an effective prevention practice. Remediation measures are intended to correct the problem behaviour, prevent a reoccurrence, protect and provide support for the victim and take corrective action for documented systemic problems related to bullying and violence. Remediation measures allow the student an opportunity to reflect on behaviours, learn pro-social skills and make amends to those affected. Working with recovery plans and restorative justice practices are categorized as remediation.
- b) **Consequences** communicate to a perpetrator that their behavior is their choice and their responsibility. A consequence respects the child’s right to make a decision, even if it’s not a good one. It’s a matter-of-fact learning experience in which you maintain a better relationship with the child as you hold them accountable. Consequences are almost always enacted in conjunction with remediation measures and restorative practices. Measures should be applied on a case-by-case basis and take into consideration a number of factors including:

Student Considerations:

- Age and developmental maturity of the students involved;
- Nature, frequency and severity of the behaviours;
- Relationships of the parties involved;
- Context in which the alleged incidents occurred;
- Patterns of past or continuing behaviours;
- Other circumstances that may play a role.

School Considerations:

- School culture, climate and general staff management of the learning environment;
- Social, emotional and behavioural supports;
- Student-staff relationships and staff behaviour toward the student;
- Family, community and neighborhood situation;
- Alignment with policies and procedures.

Examples of remedial measures and consequences may include, but are not limited to, the examples listed below:

Remediation Measures for Victims

- Meet with counsellor / mentor / special education technician / administrator / staff member to:
 - Create a safe environment to allow victim to explore feelings about incident. Maintain open lines of communication.
 - Develop a plan to ensure student's emotional and physical safety at school.
 - Ensure student does not feel responsible for the behaviour.
 - Ask student to log and report any and all future related incidents.
 - Offer counseling to help develop skills for overcoming the negative impact on self-esteem.

- A staff member will conduct scheduled follow-up meetings with the student to ensure the bullying or violence has stopped and to provide support to the student. The degree of support offered at these meetings and their frequency shall depend upon the feedback from the victim regarding the current circumstances.

- In all cases, it will be determined which members of the school staff must be made aware of the incident to ensure that the student is safe.

- Parents will be informed immediately following the incident and regularly updated until the situation is resolved.

Remediation Measures for Witnesses

- Following the incident, an intervention may be held with any witnesses to determine their role in the incident. If the incident witnessed is severe, witnesses are met, in a group or individually, to debrief the event, discuss their role and to determine more appropriate actions in the future.

- The school reserves the right to contact the parents of bystanders.

- As with victims, witnesses to acts of bullying or violence should have a reasonable expectation of feedback from intervening adult figures in a timely manner so as to guarantee a sense of safety and security in the school.

Remediation Measures for Student Exhibiting Bullying Behaviour

- Develop an intervention plan with the student. Ensure the student has a voice in the outcome and can identify ways he / she can solve the problem and change behaviours.
 - Meet with parent(s)/guardian(s) to develop a recovery plan agreement to ensure all understand school rules and expectations, as well as the long term negative consequences of bullying or violence, on all involved, and to clearly outline the consequences if the behaviour continues.
 - Meet with special education technician, school counsellor, social worker or psychologist to:
 - Explore mental health issues or emotional disturbances – what is happening and why?
 - Offer additional social skills training such as impulse control, anger management, developing empathy and problem solving.
 - Arrange for apology – written is recommended.
 - Arrange for restitution – particularly if any personal items were damaged or stolen.
 - Determine restorative practices (age appropriate).
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Remediation Measures for Student Bystanders

- Review Student Response Protocol.
 - Explore reasons why they did not intervene or report the incident.
 - Offer of coaching on how to safely intervene or help the situation.
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Element 8

SPECIFIC DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Based on the severity and / or frequency of incidents and at the discretion of the administration, the following disciplinary and / or corrective actions may include, but are not limited to:

- Parent notification
 - Admonishment / conference with student (verbal warning)
 - Reflection activity or action
 - Recovery plan ~ Restorative measures or practices
 - Written warning and deprivation of privilege(s) / service(s)
 - Restitution
 - Mediation or conflict resolution (when deemed appropriate)
 - Probation and letter of expectations
 - Detention
 - In-school suspension
 - Out-of-school suspension
 - Referral to alternative to suspension program for schools offering such a program
 - Referral to counsellor, external social / medical agencies, for support
 - Legal action / report to law enforcement, if required
 - Signaling of youth protection
 - Convocation to a disciplinary hearing at the school board
 - School transfer
 - Expulsion
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Element 9

FOLLOW-UP PROTOCOL

The principal or their designate will ensure that each incident was properly followed up on and documented. Follow-up measures will include the following:

- Verification that the incident has been properly documented.
- Verification that all parties immediately involved have been met with and that intervention protocols have been followed.
- Verification that parents of the victims and perpetrators have been contacted.
- Meeting with the victim and perpetrator to assess their well-being, and that the bullying / violence has ceased.
- Verification of the completion of all remedial measures for all parties concerned.
- Referral of parents to complaints procedure, should the parents express dissatisfaction with the course of action from the school administration.

End of Year Evaluation

To ensure the integrity of its Plan, the administration of our school will conduct a yearly evaluation that reviews:

- The *Our School Survey* results.
 - Revision and analysis of GPI / ISM (digital reporting platform) entries related to bullying and / or violence to assess decrease or increase in incidents of bullying and/or violence.
 - The initiatives put in place for the year and assessment of effectiveness of the actions.
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