

 St. Michael's College School	Students
Policy: Bullying Prevention and Intervention	B3.06.20

A. PURPOSE

St. Michael's College School (the "School") code of conduct and expectations for behavior is summed up in its motto: "Teach me goodness, discipline, and knowledge." The motto places goodness and discipline ahead of knowledge, a ranking that is not always understood. A wisdom higher than our own, however, is saying that goodness and discipline are indispensable prerequisites if the search for knowledge is worthwhile.

The School believes that all students should feel safe at school and deserve a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability.

The School also believes that a healthy, safe and inclusive learning environment where all students feel accepted is a necessary condition for student success.

The School understands that students cannot be expected to reach their full potential in an environment where they feel insecure, intimidated, or excluded.

The School recognizes that a whole-school approach is required, and that everyone – educators, school staff, parents, students and the wider community – has a role to play in creating a positive school climate and preventing unacceptable behaviour such as bullying, sexual assault, gender-based violence and incidents.

The School acknowledges that an open and ongoing dialogue among the Principal, school staff, parents and students is an important component of creating a positive school climate in which everyone feels safe and respected.

Bullying and hazing are not acceptable and will not be tolerated at the School. This Policy applies to all members of the School community, including but not limited to students, staff, coaches, and anyone who performs duties, either on a paid or volunteer basis, or on a full-time or part-time basis for the School.

This Policy must be read in conjunction with all other applicable School policies and procedures, including the Code of Conduct and Progressive Discipline Policy.

B. DEFINITIONS

- 1. Bullying** can happen in many different ways. A person who bullies harms someone else repeatedly and unfairly and has some advantage over the person who is being bullied. For example, the person who bullies may be older, bigger, smarter, or stronger. Sometimes a group of children or youth will bully another person or group of people.

2. **Hazing** is a type of bullying that involves humiliating and sometimes dangerous initiation rituals. Hazing is most often done by a group as a rite of admission into a group, club, or team; however, it can also be done by individuals. Hazing can be extreme, but it can also be more subtle. All kinds of hazing are unacceptable at the School.
3. In the *Education Act*, **bullying** means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a student where,
 - a) the behaviour is intended by the student to have the effect of, or the student 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 student 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.

This behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means. It includes cyberbullying, defined below.

4. **Cyberbullying** means bullying by electronic means, 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.

As examples, and without limiting the generality of the above definitions, bullying and hazing can involve any of the following forms:

5. Physical bullying:

- a) when someone hits, shoves, kicks, spits at, or beats up on others;

6. Verbal bullying:

- a) name-calling, mocking, hurtful teasing;
- b) humiliating or threatening someone;

c) making people do things they don't want to;

7. Social bullying:

a) excluding others from the group;

b) gossiping or spreading rumours about others;

c) setting others up to look foolish;

d) making sure others don't associate with a person;

8. Electronic bullying:

a) using a computer or phone text messages, or pictures to:

(i) threaten or hurt someone's feelings,

(ii) single out, embarrass, or make someone look bad,

(iii) spread rumours or reveal secrets about someone;

b) sexting;

(i) sending someone sexual pictures and/or videos. Sharing a sexual/intimate image of yourself or someone else.

9. Other examples of electronic or cyberbullying include:

a) sending mean texts or instant messages to someone;

b) hacking into someone's social networking or gaming profile;

c) being rude or mean to someone, harassing or threatening someone, sending mean messages, or spreading secrets, gossip, or rumours about people online (including through instant messages, texts, emails, and social media);

d) pretending to be someone else to spread hurtful messages online;

e) creating fake social media accounts, or creating blogs or websites, that ridicule someone;

f) taking someone's password and impersonating them online, or breaking into an email account and sending hurtful materials to others under an assumed identity;

g) posting private or embarrassing photos online or sending them to others;

h) engaging someone in instant messaging and tricking them into revealing personal information or images, and then forwarding it to others;

10. Racial or Religious bullying:

- a) treating people badly because of their racial, ethnic or religious background;
- b) saying negative things about a cultural or religious background;
- c) calling someone racist names;
- d) telling racist or inappropriate religious jokes;

11. Sexual bullying:

- a) unwanted and unwelcome behaviour about sex or gender that interferes with someone's life and makes them feel uncomfortable;
- b) touching, pinching or grabbing someone in a sexual way;
- c) making crude comments about someone's sexual behaviour;
- d) spreading a sexual rumour about someone;
- e) calling someone "gay", a "fag", or something similar;
- f) sexting, sending someone sexual pictures and/or videos. Sharing a sexual/intimate image of yourself or someone.

12. Disability bullying:

- a) leaving someone out or treating them badly because of a disability (e.g., learning, physical, speech);
- b) making someone feel uncomfortable because of a disability;
- c) making comments or jokes to hurt someone with a disability.

Examples of hazing include:

13. Subtle hazing:

- a) excluding or ignoring someone;
- b) calling someone demeaning names;
- c) requiring someone to carry certain things around with them at all times, memorize certain things, or do things exclusively for one's entertainment;
- d) withholding certain information from someone, or deception as to that information;
- e) engaging in contests (athletic or otherwise) between groups of students (e.g. new

students or team members vs. existing students or team members), which are purposefully unfair and do not promote friendly competition;

14. Harassment hazing:

- a) preventing someone from attending class, or engaging them with lengthy work sessions that do not allow adequate time for academic work and studies;
- b) requiring someone to perform ridiculous work assignments or personal service acts such as carrying books, running errands, performing servant duties, late night food runs, etc.;
- c) subjecting someone to deliberately uncomfortable conditions (such as a hot or small room; extremely loud or repeated music; wearing unusual, embarrassing, or uncomfortable clothing or costumes; requiring roundabout entrance to buildings; imposing silence periods; preventing or impeding personal hygiene practices);
- d) conducting any type of activity to falsely create respect and trust through trickery;
- e) verbal abuse (yelling, taunting, getting “in their face,” etc.);
- f) nudity at any time, causing indecent exposure or embarrassment;

15. Violent hazing:

- a) forced consumption or ingestion of any substance (including alcohol, food, or other substances), or preventing eating, drinking water, or sleeping;
- b) sexual violation or unwarranted touching of the body;
- c) physical assault, including pushing, shoving, tackling, paddling, beating, striking, hitting, burning, branding, tattooing, and marking;
- d) throwing anything at or onto someone;
- e) physical or mental shocks, regardless of degree or nature, and any form of forced physical activities and exercise, whether extreme or not;
- f) forcing someone to participate in any activity or become involved in any situation that is in violation of law; contrary to the person’s genuine moral or religious beliefs; or contrary to School rules.

16. Bullying prevention refers to a whole-school approach that heightens expectations for a safe, caring and inclusive school climate. It includes a shared understanding about the nature and underlying causes of bullying and its effects on the lives of individual students **and the school community.**

17. Bullying intervention is a comprehensive and effective response to the bullying incident that takes into consideration all parties involved in the bullying incident. It should

provide specific supports for the student who has been bullied, formative intervention for the student who was bullying, and strategies for responding to students who were directly observing the bullying incident.

a. The 4 D's of Bystander Intervention:

- i. Direct – immediate intervention using words
- ii. Distract – redirect the situation immediately
- iii. Delegate – send for assistance
- iv. Delay – when it is not safe, follow up as soon as it is safe to do so.

18. Harm includes harm that can be experienced in a number of ways, including physical, mental, emotional, and psychological.

19. A positive school climate is a crucial component of prevention; it may be defined as the sum total of all of the personal relationships within a school. When these relationships are founded in mutual acceptance and inclusion, and modelled by all, a culture of respect becomes the norm.¹ A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable, and accepted and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions.

C. PROCEDURES

The School recognizes that bullying:

- adversely affects students' ability to learn;
- adversely affects the school climate, including healthy relationships;
- adversely affects a school's ability to educate its students;
- can create an unsafe space or context for learning; and
- will not be accepted on school property, at school-related activities, on school buses, or in any other circumstances (e.g., online) where engaging in bullying will have a negative impact on the school climate.

Aggressive behaviour may be intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect. It can take many forms, including physical, verbal, and social. If aggressive behaviour is physical, it may include hitting, pushing, slapping, and tripping. If it is verbal, it may include name calling, mocking,

¹ *Safe Schools Policy and Practice: An Agenda for Action*, Report of the Safe Schools Action Team (Toronto: June 2006), p. 8.

insults, threats, and sexist, racist, homophobic, or transphobic comments. If it is social, or relational, aggression, it is more subtle and may involve such behaviours as gossiping, spreading rumours, excluding others from a group, humiliating others with public gestures or graffiti, and shunning or ignoring. Social aggression may also occur through the use of technology (e.g., spreading rumours, images, or hurtful comments through the use of e-mail, cell phones, text messaging, websites, social networking, or other technology).

Children who suffer prolonged victimization through bullying, those who witness bullying, as well as children who use power and aggression as bullies, may experience a range of psycho-social problems that may extend into adolescence and adulthood. Therefore, it is essential to provide support for all those involved in bullying.

Students may attain or maintain power over others in the School through real or perceived differences. Some areas of difference include, but are not limited to, size, strength, age, intelligence, economic status, social status, solidarity of peer group, religion, ethnicity, disability, need for special education, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender and race.

1. Prevention and Awareness Raising

All employees of the School must take seriously all allegations of bullying behaviour and act in a timely, sensitive, and supportive manner when responding to students who disclose or report bullying incidents.

It is critical for the School to teach, and for students to commit to learning, how to relate with others in a healthy manner. Additionally, School employees who work directly with students – including administrators, teachers, and non-teaching staff (including staff in social work, child and youth work, psychology, and related areas) – must also respond to any student behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate. Such behaviour includes all inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour, including bullying, at any time, at the School and at any school-related event if, in the employee’s opinion, it is safe to respond to the behaviour.

Bullying in any form will not be tolerated at the School. Reports of circumstances or actions that represent bullying or may constitute bullying will be addressed in any age-appropriate manner in accordance with the circumstances of each individual case. **All students and other members of the School community are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying, physical aggression, intimidation, or threats, including suspected incidents and related conduct, to a staff member immediately.** The staff member will be responsible to ensure that the School’s procedures are followed.

The School will put in place procedures:

- to allow students to report bullying incidents in a safe and welcoming environment, and in a way that will minimize the possibility of reprisal;
- that encourage parents and other persons, including teachers, coaches and other staff, to report incidents of bullying, and will facilitate such reporting;

- to address when and how to report to police as directed in the SMCS joint Police Protocol., and how to work with police on an ongoing basis to promote the safety and security of students while not prejudicing ongoing criminal proceedings.

The School will provide programs, intervention and other resources and supports (including professional assistance) for students who have been bullied, students who have witnessed incidents of bullying, and students who have engaged in bullying. In providing support, the School will involve parents and guardians as appropriate.

The School's bullying prevention and intervention strategy will include ongoing effective, interactive education for all students, which will be highly integrated into the everyday life of the School and will include at least annual workshops, respecting bullying, hazing and analogous conduct, and on strategies to prevent or address such conduct (including promotion of positive behaviours). It will also include special, but not exclusive attention, to sports activities, including specific strategies to promote positive team relationships and reduce the likelihood of bullying, hazing and other undesirable initiation rites within a sports-related environment.

2. Teaching and Training Strategies

The School will develop teaching strategies that support school-wide bullying prevention policies. These strategies will focus on developing healthy relationships by including bullying prevention and highlighting equity and inclusive education principles in daily classroom teaching and school activities.

Students will have opportunities to participate in equity and inclusive education, bullying prevention and leadership initiatives within the School.

The School will put in place training strategies on bullying prevention and intervention for all administrators, teachers and non-teaching staff, including training on cultural sensitivity, respect for diversity and special education needs.

The School may also make training available to other adults who have significant contact with students (e.g., school bus operators/drivers, volunteers), and will recognize the ongoing need to support training for new teachers.

The School's strategies on bullying prevention and intervention will be comprehensive and will include ongoing, effective training for teachers, coaches and other staff who regularly interact with students on how to identify and address bullying, including effective strategies for supporting vulnerable students.

3. Communication Strategies

The School will actively communicate its policies and procedures on bullying prevention and intervention, as well as the definition of bullying, to students, parents, teachers and other School staff, volunteers and school bus operators/drivers.

The School will ensure that assistance is available to parents whose children have been bullied, witnessed bullying, have engaged in bullying, and to parents who are concerned about bullying,

including workshops, an inventory of available resources (including a wellness counsellor) and information on all aspects of bullying.

4. Progressive Discipline

The School will put in place a comprehensive intervention strategy to address incidents of bullying, including appropriate, timely, and educational responses. Intervention and support should be consistent with a progressive discipline approach. The strategies could range from early interventions to more intensive interventions in cases of persistent bullying, with possible referral to community or social service agencies. Ongoing intervention and support may be necessary to sustain and promote positive student behaviour. For a student with special education needs, interventions, supports, and consequences will be consistent with the student's strengths, needs, goals, and expectations.

5. Monitoring and Review

The School will establish a monitoring and review process to determine the effectiveness of its bullying prevention and intervention policies and procedures, through indicators established in consultation with teachers, non-teaching staff, students, and parents (including anonymous surveys conducted regularly but at least every other year, and the collection and use of data on bullying in ways that protect confidentiality of affected persons). This Policy will be reviewed and revised periodically and as necessary pursuant to that process.

The School will also develop a plan for the sustainability of its bullying prevention and intervention strategy and related programming and resources over time.