St. Andrew School Bullying Prevention Plan and Safe, Equitable and Inclusive School Strategy

At St. Andrew Catholic Elementary School we believe that we are all members of the body of Christ and as such, we all deserve to be treated with dignity, kindness and respect at all times by every person we encounter in our school community. Jesus called to St. Andrew and said "Come follow me". This calling by Jesus reminds us of our own calling as Disciples of Christ. Like our patron before us, we are called to love and care for one another. We are fishers of people!

Definition of Bullying
"Bullying" means aggressive and typically repeated behavior by a student where,
1. The behavior is intended by the student to have the effect of, or the student ought to know that the behavior would be likely to have the effect of,
• 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
• creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, and
2. The behavior 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 special education needs, ("intimidation")

Bullying takes different forms in different contexts and at different ages. It can be physical, verbal, social/emotional or digital (cyber-bullying). Bystanders contribute to bullying when they do nothing to stop it or when they too become involved in it.

"Cyberbullying" includes electronic communication that:
➢ Is used to upset, threaten or embarrass another person.
➢ Uses email, cell phones, text messages and social media sites to threaten, harass, embarrass, socially exclude or damage reputations and friendships.
➢ includes put downs, insults and can also involve spreading rumours, sharing private information, photos or videos or threatening to harm someone.

Examples of Bullying
➢ PHYSICAL AGGRESSION: e.g., hitting, pushing, stealing, damaging property
➢ VERBAL AGGRESSION: e.g., insults, threats, taunting someone in a hurtful way, name calling, making sexist, racist or homophobic comments
➢ SOCIAL OR RELATIONAL AGGRESSION: e.g., spreading rumors about someone, excluding someone, gossiping

> ➤ ELECTRONIC (Cyberbullying): e.g., spreading rumors and/or hurtful comments through the use of email, cell phones (texts) and on social media.

Safe Schools Action Team

Guided by our Catholic faith and our school improvement plan that includes goals that contribute to the safety and well-being of all our students, our committee is formed to ensure we are on the path to success. We are challenged with our new theological theme "Do you love me?" As a school community we have been called to action to collaborate and demonstrate our love for God by ensuring a safe and inclusive school environment. We want our members to feel they are being treated with dignity, kindness and respect. These goals also support our OPHEA Healthy School initiative and mandates. Our mandate is to bring to life our Board Theological Theme "Do You Love Me?" Our SSAT will focus on school-wide initiatives that are a call to action for staff and students to be Disciples of Christ empowered by empathy to bring peace and social justice to our school, local and global communities.

Each school year, our SSAT includes our school administrators, a representative from our parish, teacher representatives, a special education teacher, a parent representative, our child and youth counselor, our Halton constable, and student representatives.

The role of this committee will include but is not be limited to the following:
> ➤ Develop and annually review the School Bullying Prevention Plan
> ➤ Implement and analyze data from the School Climate Survey (every two years)
> ➤ Identify and implement bullying prevention and intervention programs that address the needs of the school
> ➤ Identify relationship building and community building programs relevant to the needs of the school
> ➤ Assist with training and awareness raising strategies for staff, students and parents/ guardians
> ➤ Communicate bullying prevention and intervention strategies and reporting procedures to the school community

School Monitoring and Review Process
This Bullying Prevention and Inclusive School Plan was developed in the Fall of 2017 and will be reviewed annually.

Our most recent school climate survey was conducted in the Fall of 2017 and was completed by our students in grades 4-8.

Data from our most recent climate survey indicated that:

- 26% of our Intermediate students and 32% of our Junior students report that they have been the victim of bullying in the last month. There is no gender difference between our Junior students, but our female Intermediate students report being victims of bullying more often than their male peers.
- The most common types of bullying reported are verbal and social with it occurring most commonly during recess or outside of our school.
- 41% of our Intermediate students and 81% of our Junior students report bullying incidents to their parents or guardians
- Only 22% of our Intermediate students would report it to an adult at school while 64% would tell a peer at school
- 86% of Junior students feel that there is an adult at school they can talk to about bullying, that there are safe ways to report it, and 78% feel teachers step in quickly
- 54% of Intermediate students say that they make an effort to include victims of bullying when they see it occur, while 81% of Junior students report that they would comfort the victim of bullying.
- 79% of our Intermediate students report feeling safe at school and 75% of our Junior students report feeling safe in school
- Amongst our Intermediate students, immigrants who have been in Canada fewer than 5 years report higher rates of feeling excluded.
- 22% of our Intermediate students report experiencing moderate or high levels of anxiety, this is higher than the Canadian norms.

Developing Staff, Student and Community Awareness of Inclusive Practices and Bullying Prevention
Members of our school community will receive Bullying Prevention and Equity & Inclusive awareness training through:
- Staff meetings
- Item analysis of School Climate Survey by SIPSA team and review of School Improvement Plan
- Partnership with Public Health Nurse to provide and support training on mental health and wellness
- Focus on Board Theological Theme: "Do You Love Me?"
- School-wide focus on OCGE's
- Bullying Prevention Launch – November Assembly
- Creation of "Voices of Hope" Grade 5-6 student group
- Roots of Empathy Program
- Provision of professional development materials and resources
- Resources developed by our SSAT
- Community Engagement Events
- Information shared via School website
- Front matter of School Agenda which includes Code of Conduct
- Code of Conduct Assemblies
- School Spirit Group
- Liturgies
- Bulletin board dedicated to scriptural exhortations on Love

- ➢ Integration of equity and inclusion/social justice instruction into daily lessons
- ➢ Ensure all stakeholders (volunteers, support staff, students) know procedures for reporting incidents of bullying, inequity, exclusion
- ➢ Use of Restorative Justice Practices for both victims and perpetrators
- ➢ Focus on Reconciliation
- ➢ Partnership with Mary Mother of God Parish
- ➢ School-wide focus on Self-Regulation strategies
- ➢ Student Ambassadors who focus on Social Justice
- ➢ Creation of Student Council to provide leadership opportunities to our students and provide increased opportunities for student voice and empowerment
- ➢ Use of the Buddy Bench
- ➢ Posting our Bullying Prevention Plan and Safe, Equitable and Inclusive Schools strategy on our school website

Bullying Prevention and Equity & Inclusive Responsibilities
Staff:
- ➢ Organized supervision of students within the school building and on the school grounds at all times
- ➢ Watch for signs of bullying and step in to address it immediately, reporting to administration when concerns are repeated or ongoing
- ➢ Respond quickly and sensitively to bullying reports (Affirm, Ask, Assess, Act)
- ➢ Take seriously parents' concerns about bullying incidents
- ➢ Provide specific supports for any student who has been the victim of bullying, intervention for the student who has bullied, and strategies for responding to students who were directly observing the bullying incident
- ➢ Ensure students know procedures for reporting incidents of bullying
- ➢ Provide a safe environment for students who report bullying (protection from retaliation)
- ➢ Treat others with respect, dignity and kindness at all times
- ➢ Ensure that all staff (including support staff) know they have a duty to report any incidents of exclusion, inequity, or bullying
- ➢ Model positive ways of getting along with others
- ➢ Exhibit compassion and empathy, and teach students about compassion and empathy
- ➢ Regular reminders via daily announcements

Students:
- ➢ Treat one another with dignity, kindness and respect at all times
- ➢ Refuse to participate in behaviour that could be construed as hurtful to others including but not limited to bullying
- ➢ If they witness a bullying incident, speak up if they can, if not, report it to an adult immediately or as soon as possible
- ➢ Refuse to watch, laugh or join in when someone is being bullied
- ➢ Include everyone in play, especially those who are often left out; if someone is sitting on the Buddy Bench, approach them and invite them to play
- ➢ Always remember the Golden Rule and treat others the way you want to be treated

Parents and Guardians:
- ➢ Model positive ways of getting along with others
- ➢ Do not make excuses for behaviour that is unkind or hurtful to others – it is NEVER okay!
- ➢ Help their son/daughter find ways to express anger that do not involve hurting others physically or emotionally
- ➢ Teach problem solving skills
- ➢ Inform school staff if their child tells them about a bullying incident
- ➢ Help their son/daughter understand the value of accepting and celebrating individual differences and model this behaviour at home
- ➢ Be alert to signs their child is being bullied or may be bullying others

Intervention Strategies

Our staff will use the following process when bullying is reported:

1. Acknowledge the Incident / Affirm

   "You were right to report/get help from an adult."

   "I'm glad you asked for help with this."

2. Gather Information / Ask Questions

   "Tell me more about what happened."

   "Has this happened before?"

   "Did anyone try to help you?"

   "Are you telling me this is to get someone in trouble or to keep someone safe?"

3. Assess Safety / Make a Plan
   - Determine what the student needs to feel safe now?
   - What can the student do if the bullying continues?
   - What steps need to be taken to limit the possibility of retaliation for the person reporting the bullying?
   - Who will the student tell if there is another incident?
   - Alert parents to the situation and share your plan

4. Act / Follow-up
   - Determine "next step" or refer the student to an administrator
   - Tell the student what will happen next
   - Check with the student to determine the success of the intervention

Reporting Incidents of Bullying

Students, parents, school staff and volunteers may use the following methods to report incidents of bullying as appropriate:
- Tell an adult in the building (phone, in person, email etc.)
- Parent / Teacher interviews
- Make an appointment to meet with appropriate school staff

- Students who do not feel safe to report incidents of bullying during the school day are encouraged to tell their parents/guardians who can act as their advocates by contacting the classroom teacher or school administrator

When responding to a bullying incident, our school staff uses a progressive discipline approach. Use of Progressive Discipline supports a safe, inclusive and equitable learning and teaching environment in which every student can reach his or her full potential. It is a non-punitive, whole-school approach that uses a continuum of corrective and supportive interventions, supports and consequences to address inappropriate behaviour and to build upon strategies that promote positive behaviours. Strategies may range from early intervention to more intensive intervention in cases of persistent bullying, with possible referral to board support personnel, community or social service agencies.

These may include but are not limited to:
- Peer mentoring programs
- Well-being strategies and programs;
- providing students with the opportunity to learn life skills such as conflict resolution, anger management and communication skills;
- collaborative problem solving;
- conflict mediation and resolution
- documenting incidents requiring disciplinary measures;
- consideration of mitigating factors;
- withdrawal of privileges
- restitution for damages
- restorative practices (verbal or written apologies, community service, etc.)
- suspension
- ensuring that contact is made with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of students, under the age of 18, early in the disciplinary process and involving them in a plan to improve the behavior;
- CYC support
- referral to outside agencies

Consequences are at the discretion of the Principal or Vice-Principal. In the case of severe misbehavior, our format of progressive discipline consequences may be superseded. As incidents arise, it is recognized that each situation is unique. Mitigating circumstances will be considered for student age, frequency of incidents, nature and severity of incidents, student exceptionalities, extenuating circumstances, and the impact on the school climate.