
Title of Policy: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

Date Approved: Sept 2012 (formerly named P309); revised July 2018

Approved By: Administration

Purpose:

Providing students with an opportunity to learn and develop in a safe, inclusive, and accepting school climate is a shared responsibility in which all members of the school community play an important role. Together with our Safe School Policy, our Rockway Code of Conduct Policy, and Our Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy, this policy is intended to help foster a positive learning and teaching environment that supports academic achievement for all students and that helps students reach their full potential.

The prevalence and potential impact of bullying in schools is significant enough to warrant this separate policy which addresses specific strategies and responses related to bullying.

Scope:

This policy applies to all Rockway faculty, staff and students (full and part-time), as well as para-professionals who work in the school (i.e. private tutors and music instructors), volunteers who work directly with students. It also applies on school property, at school-related events/activities, on school busses, and in any other situation that affects school climate.

Applicable regulation(s):

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 144 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention, December 2012;

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 – Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools, June 2009;

Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario: Supporting Students with Special Education Needs through Progressive Discipline, Kindergarten to grade 12, 2010;

English Language Learners: ESL and ELD Programs and Services, 2007.

Policy:

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 At Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, we believe that every person is made in the image of God and is entitled to be treated with dignity, respect, and integrity. As Christians we believe that our relationships involve physical, emotional and spiritual expressions based on a loving commitment to God and each other. We also believe that God calls us to participate in a community of faith that recognizes the intrinsic worth of each individual, the necessity of taking responsibility for one's actions, and the power of restorative justice and peace-making when harm has been done.
- 1.2 We want to foster a positive, inclusive learning and teaching environment that supports academic achievement for all students and that helps students reach their full potential as people of good character. We recognize that providing students an opportunity to

learn and develop in a safe and respectful school community is a shared responsibility in which students, teachers and parents all play an important role. *Bullying adversely affects our ability to educate our students, students' ability to learn, as well as the school climate, including development of healthy relationships within the school.*

- 1.3 We believe that students need to be equipped with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to engage with the world and others critically, which means developing a consciousness that allows them to take appropriate action within their school and their local or global communities to build inclusive and equitable environments.
- 1.4 Bullying will not be accepted on school property, at school-related events/activities, or on school buses. It will also not be accepted in any other circumstances (eg. on-line) where engaging in bullying behaviour has a negative impact on school climate or on individual student(s).

2. Definitions (as per Province of Ontario Bill 13; June 2012)

- 2.1 "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;
- 2.2 For the purposes of the definition of "bullying" in subsection 2.1, behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.
- 2.3 Cyber-bullying: For the purposes of the definition of "bullying" in subsection 2.1, 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.
- 2.4 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, 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, Internet websites, social networking, or other technology).

- 2.5 Harm, as used in this memorandum, means harm that can be experienced in a number of ways, including physical, mental, emotional, and psychological.

3. Prevention and Awareness Raising

- 3.1 Positive school climate is the sum total of all the personal relationships within the school. When these relationships are founded in mutual acceptance and inclusion, and modeled by all, a culture of respect becomes the norm. Rockway is committed to a positive school climate which exists when all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable and accepted. As such, all teachers will model our belief that each person is made in the image of God and is entitled to dignity and respect.
- 3.2 Rockway students will participate in early intervention and bullying prevention opportunities and training, including but not limited to:
- a. classroom programs with curriculum links, as appropriate
 - b. character-building opportunities through school initiatives
 - c. service opportunities within the broader community to foster awareness of, and commitment to, others
 - d. chapel programs that build, reinforce and encourage the development of spiritual and personal responsibility to self and others
 - e. training and leadership opportunities in restorative justice and character development
 - f. healthy, accepting lifestyles initiatives
 - g. faith-infused learning opportunities which develop an attitude of peace-making, as well as discerning what makes for a just and compassionate world.
- 3.3 In the course of a day, there are many “teachable moments” when issues appear to arise. Prompt intervention with a few moments of coaching and support at these critical times can help all children and youth, including those who may be at risk, to develop the skills and understanding that they need to maintain positive relationships with others. Such interactions that students have with their teachers, other school staff, and fellow students, as well as with principals, vice-principals, their parents, and others, can be used to help them improve their social skills.
- 3.4 Character Development is an ongoing process of growth that intentionally models, teaches and inspires all persons to want do the right thing for the common good of our whole community. It is the journey of connecting deep caring to knowing, feeling and doing.
- 3.5 Rockway faculty and staff will engage in on-going opportunities to increase their understanding and awareness of bullying behavior, as well as their expertise in responding and engaging in restorative justice as well as peace-making strategies. They will also commit to model a respectful and Christ-centered approach in all interpersonal relationships amongst colleagues and with students.

4. Programs, Interventions and Other Supports

- 4.1 **Intervention** requires appropriate and timely responses to incidents that occur, and will be done in ways that are consistent with a progressive discipline approach. These may include, but are not limited to, the following:
- a. investigation of incidents in an impartial manner which takes into account any mitigating circumstances, and respects the dignity and safety of the victim(s) and the perpetrator(s)
 - b. procedures to allow all students to report bullying incidents safely, and which encourage bystanders to take action

- c. provision of a common language to speak about issues of bullying
- d. contact with parent(s)/guardian(s) of those involved in an incident
- e. review of behavior expectations
- f. focus on accountability and restoration of relationships
- g. referral to Student Services or other counseling agency
- h. assignment of appropriate consequences, as per Discipline Policy
- i. monitoring and review process for students involved in incidents.

4.2 **Progressive Discipline** is used to improve student behavior, is based upon correction rather than punishment, and respects the dignity of those involved. It may include a variety of interventions, supports, considerations, and consequences when bullying behavior has occurred, with the focus on improving behavior and restoring relationships, including but not limited to:

- a. meeting with parents/guardians, pupil(s) and principal or assistant-principal
- b. detentions or time-outs from class
- c. withdrawal of privileges
- d. possibility of suspension from school/classes/activities
- e. restorative practices.

4.3 **Restorative Justice** aims to restore relationships. It moves away from a straight-forward discipline process, which responds to an incident only with a determined consequence. By requiring those who have caused harm to face their victims, to consider the impact of their behaviour, and to come up with a way to make amends, it holds them accountable for their actions, and gives victims a voice.

The focus is on long-term healing for all affected and reintegrating those who have caused harm back into the school community. It uses peer mediation, circles and possibly group conferences. Restorative justice can address a wide range of issues, such as bullying and harassment, vandalism, fighting, assault, theft, etc.,

5. Notifying Parents

5.1 In the event of bullying behaviour that results in harm of a student at school, the principal or vice principal will, in a timely manner, notify the parents of students who have been harmed as the result of the incident. The principal or vice principal shall disclose the following information:

- the nature of the activity that resulted in harm to the student;
- the nature of the harm to the student;
- the steps taken to protect the student's safety, including the nature of any disciplinary measures taken in response to the activity;
- the supports that will be provided for the student in response to the harm that resulted from the activity.

5.2 The principal or vice principal will also notify the parents of students who have engaged in serious student incidents. The principal or vice principal shall disclose the following information:

- the nature of the activity that resulted in harm to the other student
- the nature of the harm to the other student
- the nature of any disciplinary measures taken in response to the activity
- the supports that will be provided for the student in response to his or her engagement in the activity

5.3 When notifying parents of these incidents, the principal will invite parents to have a discussion with her about the supports that will be provided for their child.

Reporting to the Principal or Vice Principal

- 6.1 The purpose of reporting serious student incidents is to ensure that the principal or vice principal is aware of any activities taking place in the school for which suspension or expulsion must be considered and to help ensure a positive school climate.
- 6.2 The Education Act states that an employee of the school who becomes aware that a student at the school may have engaged in a serious student incident shall report the matter to the principal or vice principal as soon as reasonably possible.
- 6.3 Volunteers and para-professionals working directly with students in the school must also report any incident of bullying to the principal or vice principal.
- 6.4 The employee must consider the safety of others and the urgency of the situation in reporting the incident, but, in any case, must report it to the principal or vice principal no later than the end of the school day.
- 6.5 In cases where an immediate action is required, a verbal report to the principal or vice principal may be made. A written report must be made when it is safe to do so.
- 6.6 All employee reports made to the principal or vice principal, including those made verbally, must be confirmed in writing, using the "Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part I". See P402 – Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour for further details about reporting protocols.
- 6.7 The principal or vice principal must investigate all reports submitted by school employees, as outlined in the Education Act. Once the investigation is complete, the principal must communicate the results of the investigation to the teacher who made the report. If an employee who is not a teacher made the report, the principal or vice principal will communicate the results of the investigation to that employee if the principal considers it appropriate. Communication between the principal or vice principal and school staff about the investigation and the results of the investigation is a shared responsibility, and is an important factor in meeting student needs and fostering collaboration in the school.
- 6.8 The principal or vice principal must not disclose more personal information than is reasonably necessary for the purpose of communicating the results of the investigation, in accordance with the Education Act. This information must be provided in a timely manner so that school staff can work with the principal and vice principal to best meet the needs of students, support a positive school climate, and help prevent future inappropriate behaviour from taking place.
- 6.9 In all cases, the principal or vice principal must provide the employee who reported the incident with written acknowledgement, using the "Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part II".
- 6.10 If the principal has decided that action must be taken as a result of an incident of bullying, he or she will file a copy of the reporting form with documentation indicating the action taken in the OSR of the student whose behaviour was inappropriate. The names of all other students that appear on the form – both students who have engaged in bullying and students who have been harmed – must be removed from the form before it is filed in the student's OSR.
- 6.11 Where the principal has taken action in the case of more than one student, a copy of the reporting form with documentation indicating the action taken must be filed in the OSR of each student whose behaviour was inappropriate. The names of all other

