

Policy 1030: Bullying Prevention and Intervention

The Nisichawayasi Nehetho Culture and Education Authority (NNCEA) committed to fostering a safe, inclusive, and culturally affirming learning and working environments for all students, staff, and visitors. We uphold the right of every individual to experience an educational setting free from intimidation, harassment, and harm. The Board recognizes that bullying, in all forms, disrupts the positive school climate essential for academic achievement and well-being, and therefore, it will not be tolerated within our schools or during any school-related activities.

This policy reflects NNCEA's proactive dedication to ensuring the safety and success of all its students. It outlines NNCEA's collective responsibility to prevent bullying incidents and to intervene promptly and effectively when they occur, fostering a school community built upon principles of mutual respect, empathy, and positive relationships that benefits.

1. Rationale:

Bullying, including cyberbullying, is a serious issue that adversely affects an individual's well-being and ability to learn, as well as the overall school climate and healthy relationships. Bullying is unacceptable in the school environment, in any school-related activity, or in any other circumstances that impact the school climate.

This policy affirms the Board's commitment to the maintenance of school environments that are free from bullying. This commitment includes dealing promptly and effectively with any incidents of bullying to ensure NNCEA's dedication to safe and accepting schools is upheld.

This policy has been developed to guide a comprehensive approach from the prevention of bullying and to assist in effectively addressing any incidents that may occur. Building a culture of mutual support and respect is key to ensuring all students feel secure, valued, and empowered to reach their full potential.

2. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Bullying: Behaviour that is intended to cause, or is known to cause, harm or distress to another person, or that creates a negative or hostile school environment. It typically involves a real or perceived power imbalance and may be repeated. Bullying can be direct or indirect and occur through any form of expression (written, verbal, physical, or electronic communication, i.e., cyberbullying).

Physical Bullying: Hitting, Kicking, pushing, tripping, damaging property, or other forms of physical aggression.

Verbal Bullying: Name-calling, teasing, insults, threats, taunting, or spreading rumors.

Social/relational Bullying: Excluding others, spreading rumors, manipulating friendships, damaging reputations, or public humiliation.

Discrimination-based Bullying: Bullying motivated by, or related to, a person's actual or perceived race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected under human right legislation.

Cyberbullying: Bullying that takes place through any form of electronic communication or technology, including but not limited to text messages, social media, instant messaging, emails, websites, or online gaming platforms. Cyber bullying can involve sending, posting, or sharing harmful, false, or embarrassing content about another person.

School environment: this includes school property, school buses, school-sanctioned activities, events, and trips, as well as any other location or activity where the student is identifiable as a student of NNCEA, or where behaviour impacts the school climate or a student's well-being at school.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled in NNCEA schools (OK School and NNOC). It covers incidents of bullying that occur:

- **On School Property:** This includes all school buildings, grounds and facilities.
- **During School-Sanctioned Activities:** Field trips, sports events, cultural gatherings, and any other activity authorized or supervised by the school or Board, regardless of location.
- **On School Buses and school-provided transportation.**
- **Other Locations (including Cyberbullying):** This policy also applies to behaviour occurring off school property, including through electronic means, if it negatively impacts the school climate, a student's well-being at school, or the overall learning environment.

4. Duties and Responsibilities

Effective bullying prevention and intervention require a shared commitment and clear understanding of roles. All members of the NNCEA school community have a part to play in creating a safe and respectful environment.

The NNCEA School Board or designate is responsible for:

- Developing, approving, and regularly reviewing this policy to ensure its effectiveness and alignment with best practices and legal requirements.
- Providing necessary resources and support to school for policy implementation, including staff training and program development.
- Ensuring compliance with this policy across all schools.

School Administration (Principals, Vice-Principals, and designated staff) is responsible for:

- Implementing and enforcing this policy consistently and fairly within their school.
- Ensuring a positive and safe school climate that promotes respectful behaviour.
- Responding promptly and appropriately to all reported incidents of bullying, including conducting thorough investigations and determining suitable interventions and consequences.
- Notifying parents/guardians as outlined in this policy.
- Providing support to students impacted by bullying and guidance to students who engages in bullying behaviour.
- Maintaining accurate records of bullying incidents and actions taken.

Teachers and Other School Staff (Including educational assistants, Counsellors, Bus Drivers etc.)

- Modelling respectful and appropriate behaviour in all interactions.
- Actively supervising students and intervening immediately and appropriately when bullying is observed or suspected.
- Reporting all suspected or observed incidents of bullying to the school administration as soon as reasonably possible.
- Participating in professional development and training related to bullying prevention and intervention.
- Fostering positive relationship with and among students.

Students are responsible for:

- Treating all members of the school community with respect and kindness.
- Refraining from engaging in any form of bullying behaviour, including cyberbullying.
- Reporting bullying incidents they experience or witness to a trusted adults (e.g. parent/guardian, teacher, school administrator, counsellor etc.).
- Cooperating with school staff during investigations of bullying incidents.
- Participating in programs and initiatives designed to prevent bullying and promote a positive school climate.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for:

- Supporting the school's efforts to prevent and address bullying.
- Discussing bullying with their children, encouraging open communication, and teaching respectful behaviour.
- Notifying school administration or relevant staff if they suspect or become aware that their child is involved in bullying (as a target or perpetrator).
- Cooperating with school staff and administration in addressing bullying incidents involving their children, including attending meetings and supporting interventions.

5. Prevention Strategies

NNCEA is committed to proactive measures to create a positive school climate where bullying is less likely to occur. These strategies include:

- **Promoting a Positive School Climate:** Fostering a school environment that is welcoming, inclusive and celebrates the diversity of all students and staff. This includes promoting a sense of belonging and respect among all members of the school community
- **Education and Awareness:** Providing ongoing education for students, staff, and parents/guardians about bullying, its various forms (including cyberbullying), its impact, and effective prevention strategies.
- **Skill Development:** Equipping students with social-emotional learning skills, conflict resolution techniques, empathy, and bystander intervention strategies to respond constructively to bullying situations.
- **Clear Expectations and Communication:** Regularly communicating the school's expectations for respectful behaviour, the consequences of bullying, and clear reporting procedures to all students, staff, and parents/guardians.

- **Staff training and professional development:** Ensuring all staff receive regular training on identifying, preventing, and responding to bullying, including understanding power imbalances and diverse student needs.
- **Supervision:** Maintaining appropriate levels of supervision in all school environments where bullying may occur, including classrooms, hallways, lunch areas, playgrounds, and online spaces monitored by the school.

6. Intervention and Response Procedures

NNCEA is committed to addressing all bullying incidents promptly, fairly, and effectively. The following procedures outline the steps taken when a bullying concern is reported:

A. Reporting the Incident:

- Students who experience or witness bullying are strongly encouraged to report it immediately to a trusted adult, such as a teacher, school administrator, school counselor, or parent/guardian.
- If the trusted adult receiving the report is not the principal or school administration, they are responsible for reporting the incident to school administration.
- To report an incident or concern directly to school administration, contact:
 - i. OK School: ashleyb@nncea.ca / 204-484-2242
 - ii. NNOC School: valeriem@nncea.ca / 204-484-2602

All reports will be handled with sensitivity and taken seriously.

B. Initial Response and Meeting

- Upon receiving a report of bullying, school administration or designated staff will initiate a prompt review of the information.
- As part of the initial response, administration will arrange a meeting with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and student(s) involved to discuss the incident and gather further details.

C. Investigation

- Following the initial meeting, administration will conduct a thorough, fair, and impartial investigation into the allegations. This process will include gathering relevant information, interviewing involved parties (while respecting privacy and confidentiality as much as possible), and reviewing any evidence.
- A conclusion will be provided based on the findings of the investigation.

D. Strategic Plan and Follow up

- Based on the investigation's findings, administration will implement a strategic plan to rectify the situation, mitigate future risks, and support all individuals impacted. This plan will be deemed appropriate to the specific circumstance of the incident.
- **Support for Student Impacted by Bullying:** Students who have been targeted by bullying will receive appropriate support, which may include counseling, academic assistance, safety planning, and strategies to rebuild their sense of security and well-being.
- **Guidance for Students who Bully:** Students identified as engaging in bullying behaviour will be provided with opportunities to understand the impact of their actions, learn empathy, and develop pro-social behaviours. Interventions will focus on accountability and education.

7. Consequences

When a student engages in bullying behaviour, NNCEA will implement appropriate consequences. These consequences aim to hold students accountable for their actions, discourage future bullying, and promote positive behavioural change.

The specific consequence will be determined by school administration on a case-by-base basis. This decision will consider various factors, including:

- The severity of the bullying incident.
- The frequency or pattern of the bullying behaviour.
- The age and developmental stage of the students involved.
- Any previous disciplinary history of the student engaging in bullying.
- The impact of the bullying on the targeted individual and the school community.

Consequences for bullying may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- **Verbal Warning and discussion:** a direct conversation with the student about their behaviour, its impact, and expectations for future conduct.
- **Parent/Guardian Meeting:** A mandatory meeting involving school administration, the student, and their parent(s)/Guardian(s) to discuss the incident, its consequences, and strategies for improvement.
- **Restorative Practices:** Participation in activities aimed to repairing the harm caused, such as apologies, restitution, mediation (if appropriate and agreed upon by all parties), or sharing circles to rebuild relationships and understanding.
- **Loss of Privileges:** Temporary removal from school activities, events, or certain privileges (e.g. recess, extracurricular activities, use of specific technology).
- **Behavioural Reflection/Learning Activities:** Assignments or activities designed to help the student understand the impact of bullying and learn more appropriate social skills.
- **Referral to Support Services:** Recommendation for counseling, anger management, social skills training, or other support programs.
- **Out-of-School Suspension:** Temporary removal from school for a specific period, during which time the student is not permitted on school property or at school-related activities.
- **Recommendation for Expulsion:** In severe or persistent cases of bullying, or when other interventions have been ineffective, the school board may consider expulsion from all NNCEA schools. This is a serious consequence for extreme or repeated violations of this policy.
- **Involvement of Law Enforcement:** If the bullying behaviour constitutes criminal offense (e.g., assault, threats, harassment), law enforcement may be contacted and involved.

All consequences will be applied fairly and consistently, in alignment with applicable NNCEA policy and Government Legislation.

8. Policy Review and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually or as necessary. Reviews will consider best practices in bullying prevention, feedback from the community, and changes in relevant legislation.