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Community, Culture and Caring School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

At Merwin Greer Public School we believe the most effective means to address bullying is through a comprehensive, school-wide approach that engages all stakeholders – students, parents, guardians, staff, School Councils, volunteers and the community.

This school based plan aligns with the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. Our school plan promotes a school-wide approach to ensuring we have a safe, inclusive and accepting school environment free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and other inappropriate behaviours.

The Board's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, as well as our school's plan, reflect the Ministry of Education guidelines.

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1. EDUCATION, AWARENESS AND OUTREACH (see Appendix A)

Merwin Greer P.S. recognizes that a whole-school approach to involving and engaging the school community will help us to address inappropriate behaviour.

We will focus on education, awareness and outreach by doing the following:

- 1. Restorative Practices – daily use, circles in classroom**

(A circle is a way of meeting with people and of having conversations in which the shape itself implies, community, connection, inclusion, fairness, equality and wholeness. It draws on the Aboriginal tradition of the Talking Circle in a complex multi-cultural, contemporary society. Meeting in a circle ensures that everyone is respected, has a voice and is appropriately heard.)

- 2. Consequences for Unacceptable Behaviour/Progressive Discipline**

Consequences for unacceptable behaviour are appropriate for the individual, circumstances and actions. Schools use progressive discipline, with a range of responses, supports and restorative practices that promote positive behaviour and inclusive school cultures. Consequences are firm,

fair, clear and appropriate to the student's age and development. They include learning opportunities, to reinforce positive behaviours and help students make good choices. For students with special education needs, consequences and supports are consistent with the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). The Board, principals and vice-principals consider all mitigating and other factors, as required in detail in the Safe, Caring and Restorative Schools Manual for administrators.

3. Progressive Discipline
 - warnings
 - time-outs
 - time-owed
 - restricted privileges
 - apology
 - restitution (e.g., paying for damage, doing community service)
 - suspension
 - expulsion
4. Use of Kelso's Choices as a model for conflict
5. Zones of Regulation
6. Special presentations and Guest Speakers
7. Various school-wide activities

We will engage parents in conversations about preventing bullying and in promoting a positive school climate by doing the following:

1. Engaging our School Council by meeting regularly to discuss and share our school code of conduct
2. Involvement in our Safe School Committee
3. Engaging in dialogue regarding the School Climate survey
4. Providing opportunities for parents/guardians to learn about Kelso's Choices, Internet Safety, Code of Conduct, Restorative Practices

2. EVALUATION OF EVIDENCE (see Appendix B)

Pre-evaluation strategy

The main issues of concern raised by our students, staff and parents in our school climate surveys and other communications are:

1. Electronic bullying, harassment or threats while at home (using text messaging; twitter; facebook; cell phones).
2. Feeling safe in the washroom and in the change room.

Concerns raised regarding our physical environment are:

1. No concerns regarding the physical environment have been raised.

The steps we follow for reporting, responding to following up on issues are as follows:

1. Steps outlined in Progressive Discipline
2. Safe Schools Incident Report form
3. Meeting with students, contacting parents, meeting with parents as required.
4. Based on a review our school climate survey results and other communications, we have been successful in the following areas:
 - a. Addressing issues of bullying/harassment
 - b. Having both students and parents believe that Merwin Greer is a good place to learn

Based on our school climate surveys and other communications, we will continue to work on the following areas that need improvement:

1. Using structures and processes designed to facilitate student voice in class
2. Facilitating inclusive practices amongst students
3. Becoming more visible in our interventions when student issues arise

3. FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS (see Appendix B)

We will actively communicate our policies, procedures and guidelines to our school community. We also will involve our school community in reviewing our policies, procedures and guidelines relating to bullying, discrimination and harassment), by taking the following steps:

1. Meeting as a School Council around Safe Schools issues
2. Putting the Code of Conduct and School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan on our school website

The roles and responsibilities of everyone in the school community - including students, staff, parents, and community members are as follows:

- respect differences among people, their ideas, opinions, experiences and perspectives
- treat one another with dignity at all times, especially when they disagree
- respect and treat everyone fairly, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, disability or language
- respect and comply with federal, provincial and municipal laws
- demonstrate the character attributes set out by the school board
- respect the rights of individuals and groups
- show proper care and regard for school and student property
- take appropriate measures to help one another
- address behaviours that are disrespectful, unwelcoming or that exclude anyone
- use non-violent means to resolve conflict
- dress appropriately with regard to exposure, cleanliness and message
- respect persons who are in a position of authority
- respect the common goal to work in a positive environment of learning and teaching.

4. PREVENTION (see Appendix C)

We recognize that promoting a positive, welcoming and inclusive learning environment will help to prevent bullying, harassment, and discrimination. We are committed to taking steps to prevent bullying.

These steps include active use of our Safe, Caring and Restorative School Team, which promotes a safe, inclusive and accepting school climate. This team will include a student, parent, teacher, non-teaching staff member, community partner and the principal.

The roles and responsibilities of this team are as follows:

At Merwin Greer, this team is made up of our staff with student voice from the Climate Survey. The team's main responsibility is to maintain the ongoing emphasis on student safety and well-being.

Other steps to prevent bullying, harassment and discrimination will include:

A. PROGRAMS TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO BULLYING

1. Kelso's choices
2. Model Me Kids
3. Zones of Regulation
4. Publicizing KPR's Report Bullying web link through school newsletters and the school website
5. Lunch Buddies/Monitors

B. PROGRAMS THAT BUILD POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

1. Restorative practice refresher
2. Circles in the classroom
3. The restorative classroom, using restorative approaches to foster effective learning
4. School Council meetings

C. ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE A POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

1. Circles in Classroom
2. Open House
3. Monthly Assemblies
4. Special Event Days
5. Daily circles
6. Teacher PLC on circles as pedagogy

D. AWARENESS RAISING STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS

1. Health Curriculum
2. Participating in Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week in November, Pink Shirt Day in February and the Day of Pink in April
3. Monthly Assemblies
4. Guest Speakers
5. Classroom Circles/Discussions

E. RAISING AWARENESS AND ENGAGING PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY

1. School Website and parent communication via email
2. School Council

F. CURRICULUM AND DAILY LEARNING

- a. Classroom Circles/Community of Learners
- b. Professional Learning Communities (PLC) on building safe classroom communities using the 5 themes and 5 useful questions:
 - i. Everyone has a unique and equally valued perspective.
 - What's happened from your perspective?
 - ii. Thoughts influence emotions, emotions influence actions.
 - What were you thinking at the time and what have you thought about since?
 - iii. Empathy and consideration.
 - Who has been affected and how?
 - iv. Needs and unmet needs/
 - What do you need so that things can be put right and everyone can move on?
 - v. Collective responsibility for problem solving and decision making
 - How can you address these various needs together?
- c. Model Me Kids

G. STAFF AND STUDENT ROLE MODELS

We also have identified the following learning and training opportunities for staff and the school community:

1. Staff training
 - a. Circles in the classroom
 - b. PLC and Staff Meetings to include Student Well-Being goals and accompanying strategies
2. Community
 - a. Student Well-Being goals included in Safe Schools Committee meetings as part of School Council Agenda
 - b. Frequent turnover among administrators

5. INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES (see Appendix C)

We will take the following steps to respond to all incidents of bullying, harassment, discrimination and other inappropriate behaviours, and to support students.

1. Provide Safe Methods for Students to Report Bullying
 - a. Speak to a Teacher, other staff member, Principal or Vice Principal
 - b. KPRDSB Report Bullying Web link – available on all school websites
 - c. Via parent/guardian conversation with school staff
 - d. Emailing a school staff member
 - e. Kids Help Phone Line – available on all school websites
2. Restorative practices
 - a. List types of proactive and responsive approaches
3. Progressive discipline
4. Reintegration of students from suspensions or expulsions

APPENDIX A – BULLYING DEFINITIONS AND COMMUNICATION

We use the Ministry of Education’s definition of bullying as follows:

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 (“intimidation”).

For the purposes of the definition of “bullying” above, behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

Cyber-bullying

For the purposes of the definition of “bullying” above, 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.

In other words, bullying:

- is a deliberate act to harm or exclude someone or “put someone down”
- usually happens more than once over time
- involves someone having more power over another and abusing that power

Cyber-bullying means using the internet, social media, texting or other electronic means to bully someone.

In communicating with students, staff and our school community, we will:

- Identify different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying
- Understand the myths and realities of bullying behaviour
- Identify bullying and how it is different from conflict, aggression and teasing
- Understand power and relationships among peers
- Identify how bias, prejudice and hate can lead to bullying
- Identify different signs and underlying factors of bullying, such as body image, racism, sexism, homophobia, disability, etc.
- Understand a “whole school approach” and the importance of everyone contributing to a positive school climate for student achievement, success and well-being
- Understand the factors that contribute to a safe, inclusive, caring and accepting school climate
- Identify ways to make students aware of how they can help prevent and respond to bullying
- Identify ways to engage parents in conversations about preventing bullying and promoting a positive school climate
- Reach out to parents and the broader school community to promote safe, caring, inclusive school environments
- Reflect on our relationships and interactions, and focus on promoting healthy relationships
- Become knowledgeable about community partners and resources available in our community

We also will share with our school community, all related policies and procedures. These include the Board and School Code of Conduct, equity and inclusive education policy and guidelines for religious accommodations, procedures to address incidents of discrimination, progressive discipline approach, and bullying prevention and intervention plans and strategies.

APPENDIX B - EVALUATION OF EVIDENCE

We recognize that effective anti-bullying strategies must be based on evidence. We will base our bullying prevention and intervention strategies, practices and programs on evidence from our school climate surveys and other relevant information and communications we receive. We will measure the success of our anti-bullying initiatives and strategies:

- Evaluate the evidence to identify the main areas of concern and issues in the physical environment, determine current procedures, and assess the success of those procedures, based on results of the school climate surveys and other relevant information.
- Identify children and youth involved in bullying (including the bully, the person being bullied, and those who may have witnessed or been affected by the bullying), as well as identify and assess any roles.
- Review and update our anti-bullying strategies as a result of gathering new information, and share the information with our school community.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

We will evaluate the results of future school climate surveys to make sure our follow-up actions were effective. This evidence will identify and measure the success of steps we took to prevent or respond to bullying and to support students. This will help us to make further changes, where needed, to ensure safe, caring, welcoming and inclusive school environments.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

We recognize that a consistent, whole school approach, strong policies and appropriate legislation are important for bringing widespread change.

We also recognize that our policies and goals must address the challenges identified in our school climate surveys and other data.

APPENDIX C – PREVENTION, INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES

We also will:

- “check in” regularly with students who are at risk of being bullied or who are affected by bullying
- provide opportunities for teachers to develop effective classroom management skills using progressive discipline
- establish and maintain respectful, safe, caring and restorative classrooms
- provide supervision in areas where and when bullying happens, as identified through climate surveys

INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES

We recognize the importance of responding immediately to bullying and providing support to students as quickly as possible through a school-wide approach.

To this end, we will:

- use “teachable moments” and progressive discipline to address inappropriate behaviour
- consider mitigating and other factors that are affecting a student’s behaviour
- ensure we have steps in place to identify and respond to bullying when it happens
- identify ways to support all students involved in bullying
- communicate the progressive discipline approach to our school community, as well as procedures we have in place to support students