# GREATER ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
# BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN
# 2023-2024

The GECDSB formally recognizes the 3rd week of November as Bullying Prevention and Intervention Week. However, Bullying Prevention and Intervention is on-going and year-round and is everyone's responsibility.

**SECTION:**

1. **Purpose**
2. **Education Awareness and Outreach**
3. **Evaluation of Evidence**
4. **Policy and Procedures**
5. **Prevention**
6. **Interven (e)-r to address**

**engages all stakeholders**

**to develop, in consultation with**
**rdians, school councils and the**

## 2. EDUCATION, AWARENESS AND OUTREACH

The Board and each school will endeavour to increase education, awareness and outreach, which will help to engage all members of the school community to support school and Board efforts to deal with inappropriate student behaviour, including bullying.

Communications with the school community will include the following Ministry of Education definition of bullying as defined in section 1 of the Education Act:

**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;

For the purposes of the definition of "bullying" in subsection (1), behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

**Cyber-bullying**

For the purposes of the definition, "bullying" in subsection (1) 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.

The Board and schools should strive to:

- Identify different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying.
- Understand the myths and realities of bullying behaviour.
- Identify bullying and differentiate bullying from rough play and conflict.
- Differentiate between teasing and bullying.
- Understand power and peer dynamics.
- Identify how biases, prejudice and hate can lead to bullying.
- Identify different manifestations and underlying factors of bullying, such as body image, racism, sexism, homophobia, disability.

In addition, each school should take the following steps:

- Recognize a whole school approach and the importance of a positive school climate for student achievement and well-being.
- Include positive culture and well-being goals in its school improvement planning.
- Develop awareness and understanding of the factors that contribute to a safe, caring and inclusive school climate.
- Identify ways to make students aware of how they can help prevent, address and report bullying.
- Seek student and parent/guardian voice in developing bullying prevention and intervention strategies.
- Identify strategies to engage parents in conversations about bullying and prevention and how to promote a positive school climate
- Reach out to parents/guardians and the broader school community. Consider the following:
    - Reflect on relationships and interactions and focus on promoting healthy relationships using a variety of strategies.
    - Become knowledgeable about community partners and resources in the school and in the broader community.
- Communicate and share with the school community, policies and procedures pertaining to safe schools, bullying prevention and intervention

## 3. EVALUATION OF EVIDENCE

Pre-evaluation Strategy

Each school will base its bullying interventions, strategies, practices and programs on evidence. Each school will take the following steps to assess their anti-bullying initiatives and strategies:

- Identify the main issues of concern in a particular school raised by students, school staff, parents/guardians, as well as identify issues in the physical environment.

## 7. CURRENT PLAN OF ACTION 2023-2024

### Action item # 1: Bullying Awareness Week and “Welcoming and Inclusive Schools” Campaigns

Bullying Awareness and Prevention is on-going and year-round. Last year our System Wide Bullying Prevention and Intervention Committee theme was **WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS.** The Mental Health Leadership Committee feels strongly that this needs to continue to be a focused priority in our schools and have decided to continue with this theme for this year. The role of schools is to enhance the mental health of all students. Before we can understand our students, promote teaching and learning and partner with home, school and community partners, students first need to be welcomed and included into their school environment. What do all students need at school? Every day students need a smile and a warm welcome, a connection to a caring adult, and a sense of belonging and inclusion. They need a chance to learn and a safe place to take risks. They need someone who will notice and reach out when something is wrong, someone who will listen and try to find them help and someone who believes in them and will instill hope.

For Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week 2023, GECDSB Schools will continue to promote and create **“WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS”.** By planning activities, launching new initiatives and/or continuing with initiatives that were introduced last year that ,ant458.0 0Td (7om)7 4e BT ntng. ,i