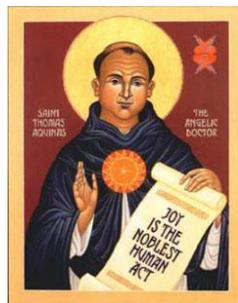


École St. Thomas d'Aquin's School Policy Against Bullying



PURPOSE

All students, families and employees within the Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education have the right to a learning and work environment free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. This policy supports school communities to prevent, reduce and respond to bullying.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying means repeated and hostile or demeaning behaviour by an individual where the behaviour causes harm, fear or distress to another individual in the school community, including psychological harm or harm to the individual's reputation. Bullying often occurs, but is not limited to, circumstances where one party endeavors to maintain power and control over another based upon systemic inequalities within a social setting.

Bullying takes many forms. Examples of bullying could include:

- **Physical** - hitting, pushing, tripping, kicking, spitting on others etc.
- **Verbal** - teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing, spreading rumours etc.
- **Non-Verbal** - writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, using e-mail or text messaging to hurt others, rude gestures etc.
- **Exclusion** - deliberately excluding others from group, refusing to sit next to someone etc.
- **Extortion** - threatening to take someone's possessions, food or money etc.
- **Property** - stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying property etc.
- **Cyber** - any form of bullying which is carried out through electronic means such as email, chat room messages, text messages, web page posts etc.

HOW DO WE PREVENT BULLYING AT ÉCOLE ST. THOMAS D'AQUIN?

We believe, based on research, that prevention strategies through education that involve the whole school community (students, staff and parents) are more likely to reduce bullying. Therefore, at École St. Thomas d'Aquin, we recognise that we all share the responsibility to prevent bullying. The Catholic worldview, which represents the antithesis of bullying, will be taught explicitly, continually modelled, clearly demonstrated and generously affirmed across all facets of school life.

1. Explicit teaching of positive behaviours embedded within the curriculum addressing positive relationships, conflict resolution, resilience, bystander action etc.
 - Positive reinforcement of expected behaviours discussed at weekly assemblies
 - E.P.I.C. Program
 - "Think" sheets
 - Mental Health presentations
2. Regularly recognising and acknowledging students who demonstrate appropriate behaviours that promote and restore right relationships
 - Weekly Student of the Week recognition
 - Monthly "Lunch with the Principal" opportunity
 - Year-end school awards.
3. Vigilant classroom, playground and transition supervision
 - Teachers actively supervise children at all times
 - Teachers should note supervisory duties for the day and turn up promptly to duty.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

STUDENTS

At École St. Thomas d'Acquin School, **students** are encouraged to:

- Treat others with the respect and dignity that is expected of any Catholic school student
- Take some positive action to stop the bullying if they observe an incident [i.e. Kelso's Choices]
- Report the bullying incident to a teacher or principal as soon as possible
- Make it clear to their peers that bullying is not accepted
- Whenever possible, stand up for the student being bullied, and refrain from joining in bullying behavior.

STAFF

At École St. Thomas d'Acquin School, **staff** are expected to:

- Take positive action to stop the bullying when they observe an incident
- Report the issue to the principal for appropriate intervention
- Remain alert to signs of bullying
- All reports of bullying behaviours will be listened to, taken seriously and investigated by staff and/or principal.

PARENTS

At École St. Thomas d'Acquin School, **parents** are encouraged to:

- Listen to their child and encourage their child to speak to their teacher and principal at school
- Contact the school if they have a concern
- Ensure that they have the facts (as there is two sides to every story)
- Support the school's policy against bullying and actively encourage their child to avoid bullying behavior.

HOW DO WE RESPOND TO BULLYING AT ÉCOLE ST. THOMAS D'ACQUIN SCHOOL?

Bullying is viewed as a major breach of the school rules and behavioural expectations.

Any reports of bullying will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken promptly. Students are our responsibility once they leave their home and remain our responsibility until they return home. The response to bullying will include:

1. Guidance and other support for the recipient of the bullying (i.e. teaching skills and strategies to deal with bullies, resilience and social skills, counselling, conflict management skills etc.).
2. Guidance and support for 'bystanders', 'supporters' and witnesses of the bullying (i.e. intervention strategies etc.) .
3. Gage appropriate and consistent sanctions for the student who bullied (i.e. consistent with Division AP 160).
4. Interventions and support for the student who bullied included in a *Behaviour Support Plan* (i.e. specific interventions developed to reduce the bullying behaviour, teaching of replacement behaviours etc.).
5. Where appropriate, informing parents as stated in the policy and involving them in any action and follow up.

PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATING BULLYING AND FOLLOW UP

1. Preliminary interview(s) will be conducted to ascertain the specific nature of the bullying. These interviews should be with individuals initially (i.e. student being bullied, witnesses, student engaging in bullying behaviour, staff members etc.).
2. The initial interviews will focus on the safety of individuals. This should include:
 - The unacceptable nature of bullying
 - A clear statement on the consequences if the bullying were to continue
 - A clear statement on the consequences if there are any reprisals as a result of the reporting of the incident
 - Actions that will be implemented to stop further instances of bullying.
3. The principal will have discretion over the level of severity of the consequence(s) issued.
4. Follow up interviews, conducted by the principal, will focus on appropriate strategies to assist and support all involved.
5. The principal will keep a record of the interviews.
6. Regular monitoring and follow up with the students involved will be necessary (i.e. daily, prior to or after break times etc.).
7. Review of the *Behaviour Support Plan* (if applicable) will take place to modify strategies and supports.
8. Any further recurrence of bullying may result in an issue of warning, suspension or the removal of the student from the school through suspension, transfer or expulsion.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed by staff, parents and students annually to ensure that proper protocol of the policy is being followed. This policy will be open for revisions, additions and deletions during this review.