

Creating Safe and Caring Schools

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Resources:	• <i>The Education Act</i>, RSO 1990, c E.2 • <i>Immunization of School Pupils Act</i>, R.S.O. 1990, c. I.1 • <i>Trespass to Property Act</i>, R.S.O. 1990, c. T.21 • <i>Human Rights Code</i>, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19 • Policy and Program Memorandum 9: Reporting of Children in Need of Protection • Policy and Program Memorandum 120: Reporting Violent Incidents to the Ministry of Education • Policy and Program Memorandum 128: The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Boards of Conduct • Policy and Program Memorandum 141: School Board Programs for Students on Long-Term Suspensions • Policy and Program Memorandum 142: School Board Programs for Expelled Students • Policy and Program Memorandum 144: Bullying Prevention and Intervention • Policy and Program Memorandum 145: Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour • Provincial Model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol 2015

- TVDSB Securing Schools and Buildings Procedure (4008d)
- TVDSB Police and School Board Protocol Procedure (4008e)
- TVDSB Management of Aggressive Behaviour Procedure (4008f)
- TVDSB Violence Threat Risk Assessment: School Response to Threatening Behaviours Procedure (4008g)
- TVDSB Access to Schools Procedure (4008h)
- TVDSB Code of Conduct Procedure (4008i)
- TVDSB Bullying Prevention and Intervention Procedure (4008j)
- TVDSB Bias-Aware Progressive Discipline: Suspension, Expulsion and Appeals Procedure (4008k)
- TVDSB Public Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedure (2030a)
- TVDSB Development and Management of Board Policies and Administrative Procedures Policy (2032) and Procedure (2032a)
- TVDSB Anti-Sex Trafficking Protocol

1. Intent

- 1.1. This policy ensures that Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) school-based operations conform to the *Education Act* and Policy and Program Memoranda (PPM) 9, PPM 120, PPM 128, PPM 141, PPM 142, PPM 144 and PPM 145.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. Due to the significant number of key terms requiring definitions, all definitions can be found in Appendix A.
- 2.2. Throughout this document, all defined terms will be capitalized to indicate they have a policy-specific definition.

3. Objective of Policy

- 3.1. The TVDSB policy is to support a system strategy for building and sustaining a positive School Climate that is safe, caring, and Inclusive, with specific consideration for those who experience disproportionate outcomes
- 3.2. All TVDSB schools must develop and maintain school-based plans that align with this policy and TVDSB Procedures 4008 (d) through (k).

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1. **Parents and caregivers, students, staff, and the School Community** must be:
 - 4.1.1. Invited to participate in the development of the TVDSB Creating Safe and Caring Schools Policy (4008) and
 - 4.1.2. Active participants in the implementation of the TVDSB Creating Safe and Caring Schools Policy (4008) at both the system and school levels.
- 4.2. The **Director of Education** will develop and implement procedures to operationalize this policy.
- 4.3. Additional roles and responsibilities can be found in TVDSB Procedures 4008 (d) through (k).

5. Creating Safe and Caring Schools Policy: A Relationship-Based Approach

- 5.1. TVDSB believes safe schools result from caring and consistent relationships between and among students, staff, Parents, caregivers and the community. By focusing on relationships, TVDSB supports students' sense of safety and belonging, and as a result, students are prepared to learn.
- 5.2. As part of TVDSB using a Relationship-Based Approach in creating safe schools, the following are essential:
 - 5.2.1. Effective, accessible, and Culturally Inclusive communication,
 - 5.2.2. Collaboration that is solution-oriented and focused on a strength-based approach and
 - 5.2.3. Transparency and Procedural Fairness.

- 5.3. To support safe schools that are rooted in an evidence-informed, Relationship-Based Approach, TVDSB will strive to:
 - 5.3.1. Support the physical, emotional and mental health of all members of the School Community.
 - 5.3.2. Use Identity-Affirming practices that support belonging, Cultural Safety and Equity.
 - 5.3.3. Use Trauma-Informed practices.
 - 5.3.4. Be free of hate, as well as explicit and implicit Bias.
- 5.4. In valuing a Relationship-Based Approach, should there be concerns or complaints regarding the implementation of this Policy or TVDSB Procedures 4008 (d) through (k), individuals are encouraged to follow the TVDSB Resolving Public Concerns and Complaints Procedure (2030a).
- 5.5. The approaches listed in Section 5 apply throughout all stages of the continuum approach listed in Section 6.

6. Creating Safe and Caring Schools Policy: A Continuum Approach

- 6.1. This policy and TVDSB Procedures 4008 (d) through (k), approach the creation of safe schools using a continuum approach, which includes prevention strategies, interventions, supports, and consequences.
- 6.2. TVDSB commits to providing opportunities for all members of the School Community to increase their knowledge, understanding, and ability to implement the Creating Safe and Caring Schools continuum.
- 6.3. TVDSB also has specific strategies and approaches for each stage of the continuum. Some examples include:
 - 6.3.1. **Prevention**
 - 6.3.1.1. The creation of standardized expectations for School Community behaviour through the TVDSB Code of Conduct Procedure (4008i), and ongoing communications and reminders of these expectations.
 - 6.3.1.2. The development and implementation of Safe and Inclusive School Plans for each TVDSB School.

- 6.3.1.3. Ongoing communication, training, and supports to prevent and reduce instances of Bullying, as outlined in TVDSB Bullying Prevention and Intervention Procedure (4008j).
- 6.3.1.4. A proactive and preventative approach that focuses on building and sustaining relationships and early and ongoing identification of potential Safe Schools Incidents.

6.3.2. Intervention

- 6.3.2.1. TVDSB will use the following strategies and approaches when situations require intervention, including Safe School Incidents;
 - 6.3.2.1.1. Progressive Discipline,
 - 6.3.2.1.2. Restorative Approaches and
 - 6.3.2.1.3. Interventions that are Procedurally Fair.
- 6.3.2.2. To understand the steps TVDSB takes:
 - 6.3.2.2.1. To secure schools or administrative buildings, refer to TVDSB Securing Schools and Buildings Procedure (4008d).
 - 6.3.2.2.2. To manage aggressive behaviour, refer to TVDSB Management of Aggressive Behaviour Procedure (4008f).
 - 6.3.2.2.3. In response to threat-making behaviours, refer to TVDSB Violence Threat Risk Assessment: School Response to Threatening Behaviours Procedure (4008g).
 - 6.3.2.2.4. When there is suspected Bullying, refer to TVDSB Bullying Prevention and Intervention Procedure (4008j).

6.3.3. Supports

- 6.3.3.1. TVDSB recognizes that all members of the School Community may require support at one time or another. In an effort to ensure that the School Community can access these supports, TVDSB will prioritize transparency, communication, and making it clear how to navigate the support systems available to them.
- 6.3.3.2. TVDSB Procedures (d) through (k) outline specific supports and how to access them.

6.3.4. Consequences

- 6.3.4.1. TVDSB recognizes the need for accountability and consequences, and relies on the following documents to guide that process:

- 6.3.4.1.1. TVDSB Access to Schools Procedure (4008h),
- 6.3.4.1.2. TVDSB Code of Conduct Procedure (4008i),
- 6.3.4.1.3. TVDSB Bias-Aware Progressive Discipline: Suspension, Expulsion and Appeals Procedure (4008k) and
- 6.3.4.1.4. TVDSB Progressive Discipline of Employees Policy and Procedure (3012).

7. Creating Safe and Caring Schools Policy Statements on Bullying

7.1. TVDSB recognizes that:

- 7.1.1. Bullying is a relationship problem;
- 7.1.2. Bullying adversely affects a student's well-being and ability to learn;
- 7.1.3. Bullying adversely affects the School Climate, including healthy relationships;
- 7.1.4. Bullying, including Cyber-Bullying, is a serious issue and is not acceptable in the school environment (including virtual), at a school-related activity, or in any other circumstances that will have an impact on the School Climate and
- 7.1.5. There is a difference between conflict and Bullying, and when harm is caused, it must be addressed.

8. Creating Safe and Caring Schools Policy Statements on Progressive Discipline

8.1. TVDSB will support a safe, Inclusive, and accepting learning and teaching environment in which every student can reach their full potential. In order for this to happen:

- 8.1.1. All inappropriate student behaviour, including Bullying, must be addressed;
- 8.1.2. Responses to behaviours that are contrary to TVDSB Code of Conduct Procedure (4008i) must be developmentally appropriate;
- 8.1.3. Progressive Discipline is an approach that makes use of a continuum of prevention programs, interventions, supports, and consequences, building upon strategies that build skills for healthy relationships and promote positive behaviours;
- 8.1.4. The range of interventions, supports, and consequences used by TVDSB

and all schools must be clear and developmentally appropriate, and must include learning opportunities for students to reinforce positive behaviours and help students make good choices;

- 8.1.5. Information in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) must be considered in the determination of interventions, supports, and consequences for students with special education needs and
- 8.1.6. The TVDSB, and school administrators, must consider all Mitigating and Other Factors, as required by the *Education Act*.

9. Monitoring and Review

- 9.1. TVDSB will use the information in Section 9, to provide recommendations for future policy changes, as per TVDSB Development and Management of Board Policies and Administrative Procedures Policy (2032) and Procedure (2032a).
- 9.2. The Board of Trustees will receive an annual report that includes yearly rates of suspensions, expulsions, and Violent Incidents (as defined in PPM 120). These rates will be shared based on panel, as well as other categories, when the data is available and in alignment with privacy considerations.
- 9.3. TVDSB will collect and review the following information to inform if changes are needed to TVDSB Procedures 4008 (d) through (k).
 - 9.3.1. TVDSB shall administer a voluntary and anonymous School Climate Survey at least every other year, and population level results will be shared with Trustees, when available. The goals of the survey are as follows:
 - 9.3.1.1. Assess perceptions of safety;
 - 9.3.1.2. Inform planning decisions about programs to help prevent Bullying and promote safe and Inclusive schools;
 - 9.3.1.3. Monitor the effectiveness of programming;
 - 9.3.1.4. Help to build and sustain healthy School Climates and
 - 9.3.1.5. Inform the development of Safe and Inclusive School Plans.
 - 9.3.2. TVDSB will track the number of Lockdown and Hold and Secure response plan activations as outlined in TVDSB Securing Schools and Building



Procedure (4008d).

Appendix A – Definitions

1. **Bias** refers to an opinion, preference, prejudice, or inclination that limits an individual's or a group's ability to make fair, objective, or accurate judgements. Biases can be both implicit and explicit.
2. **Bullying** refers to aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by an individual where,
 - a. The behaviour is intended by the individual to have the effect of, or the individual 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
 - iii. The behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between individuals 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").
 - b. For the purposes of the definition of "bullying", behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.
 - c. **Cyber-Bullying** refers to bullying by electronic means, including,
 - i. Creating a web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
 - ii. Impersonating another person as an author of content or messages posted on the internet; and
 - iii. Communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.
3. **Board** or **TVDSB** refers to the Thames Valley District School Board.
4. **Cultural Safety** refers to when people feel comfortable about expressing their ideas, opinions, and needs and about responding authentically to topics that may be culturally

sensitive

5. **Culturally Inclusive** refers to recognizing and valuing the diverse cultural backgrounds, language and contributions of individuals. It aims to create environments where everyone feels respected, valued and able to fully contribute, regardless of their cultural background.
6. **Equity** refers to a condition or state of fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of all people. A distinct process of recognizing differences within groups of individuals and using this understanding to achieve substantive equality in all aspects of a person's life.
7. **Identity-Affirming** refers to actions, behaviours, or policies that recognize, validate, and support an individual's self-identified gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or any other protected grounds of the Human Rights Code. This approach aims to create an inclusive and respectful environment where people feel seen, valued and accepted for who they are
8. **Inclusion** or **Inclusive** refers to the principle of acceptance, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are accepted.
9. **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** refers to a written plan that describes special education programs, accommodations and services that a school board will provide for a student. IEPs are based on a thorough assessment of a student's strengths, needs and ability to learn and demonstrate learning.
10. **Mitigating Factors** and **Other Factors** refers to circumstances or considerations that may lessen the severity of disciplinary actions taken against a student, as per *Ontario Regulation 472/00* of the *Education Act*. These factors are considered to ensure that the disciplinary response is fair, just, and appropriate to the individual situation.
11. **Parents** refers to parent(s) and guardian(s) and can also include caregivers or close family members who raise the child.
12. **Procedural Fairness** or **Procedurally Fair** refers to a transparent process where all individuals have the right to share their experience, be told of any allegations to prepare a response, respond to allegations, and the reasons for the decision that was made.

This also includes thorough investigations and access to impartial review and appeals.

- 13. Progressive Discipline** refers to a whole school approach that utilizes a continuum of prevention programs, interventions, supports, and consequences, which may include suspension and expulsion, to address inappropriate student behaviour, while accounting for individual circumstances. This approach builds upon strategies that promote and foster positive behaviours to create safe, inclusive, and accepting schools.
- 14. Relationship-Based Approach** refers to the idea that healthy relationships are central to human development and are the basis through which trust, safety, connection and community are formed.
- 15. Restorative Approaches** refers to a proactive and responsive approach that centres relationships, community, accountability, and finding collaborative solutions to build and strengthen relationships and restore and repair relationships after harm has occurred.
- 16. Safe and Inclusive Schools Plan** refers to the yearly plan developed at the school level by the Safe and Inclusive School Team which sets goals and actions in order to create a safe school community. This plan replaces the former Bullying Prevention and Intervention (BPIP) and Safe and Accepting School Plan.
- 17. Safe and Inclusive School Team** refers to a team established at every TVDSB school that is responsible for fostering a safe, inclusive, and accepting school climate through the implementation of the Safe and Inclusive School Plan. Each team is chaired by a staff member and includes the principal, at least one parent or caregiver, teacher, non-teaching staff member or community partner, and ideally at least one student.
- 18. Safe Schools Incident** refers to any incident in which a negative action or behaviour impacts the sense of safety or belonging of others.
- 19. School Climate** refers to the learning environment and relationships found within a school and school community.
- 20. School Climate Survey** refers to a voluntary and anonymous survey administered to students, parents and caregivers and school staff at least every two years. The survey is used to help schools: assess perceptions of safety, inform planning decisions about programs to help prevent bullying and promote safe and inclusive schools, determine effectiveness of programs and build and sustain positive school climate.

- 21. School Community** refers to the collective group of individuals who are connected to and interact within a school environment. This includes students, teachers, administrators, staff, bus drivers, volunteers, parents and caregivers, neighbours of the school, visitors and local community organizations.
- 22. Serious Student Incident** refers to any activity listed in Paragraphs 1 or 3 of Section 5 of the TVDSB Bias-Aware Progressive Discipline: Suspension, Expulsion and Appeals (4008k).
- 23. Trauma-Informed** refers to an approach that acknowledges and accounts for the impacts of stress and or trauma on a person's well-being and ability to stay regulated.
- 24. Violent Incident** refers to the following list, as per PPM 120:
- a. Possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm;
 - b. Physical assault causing bodily harm requiring medical attention;
 - c. Sexual assault;
 - d. Robbery;
 - e. Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person;
 - f. Extortion and
 - g. Hate and/or Bias-motivated occurrences.