

Creating Safe and Caring Schools

Policy Number:	4008
Policy Owner:	Learning Support Services - Safe Schools
Effective Date:	1999 February 26
Amendment Dates:	2002 Feb. 26 2008 Feb. 12
EIE Review Date:	
Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Education Act, RSO 1990, c E.2</i> • <i>Immunization of School Pupils Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. I.1</i> • <i>Trespass to Property Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. T.21</i> • 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 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)

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 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, Inclusive, and accepting of all.
- 3.2. All TVDSB schools must develop and maintain school-based plans that align with the Safe Schools Policy Guiding Principles (Section 5) and Approaches (Section 6) included in this policy.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1. **Parents and caregivers, students, staff, and the community** must be invited to participate in developing and implementing the TVDSB Creating Safe and Caring Schools Policy (4008) at both the system and school levels.
- 4.2. The **Director of Education** or **designate** will develop and implement procedures to operationalize the policy statements in this document.

5. Safe Schools Policy Guiding Principles

- 5.1. TVDSB believes safer 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 safer schools,

we commit to being transparent and Procedurally Fair. To accomplish this goal, 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. A proactive and preventative approach that focuses on early and ongoing identification of potential Safe Schools Incidents.

6. Safe Schools Policy Approaches

- 6.1. To support safer schools that are rooted in an evidence-informed, Relationship-Based Approach, TVDSB's safe schools system strategy will strive to:
 - 6.1.1. Support the physical, emotional and mental health of the School Community.
 - 6.1.2. Use Trauma-Informed practices.
 - 6.1.3. Use Identity-Affirming practices that support Cultural Safety and Equity.
 - 6.1.4. Be free of hate and explicit and implicit Bias.
- 6.2. When addressing Bullying prevention and intervention, as well as Safe Schools Incidents, TVDSB will use Progressive Discipline and Restorative Approaches.
- 6.3. TVDSB will develop standardized expectations for School Community behaviour through the TVDSB Code of Conduct Procedure (4008i).

7. Safe 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 both forms of harm must be addressed.

8. Safer 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 shall administer a voluntary and anonymous School Climate Survey at least every other year. The goals of the survey are as follows:

- 9.1.1. Assess perceptions of safety;

- 9.1.2. Inform planning decisions about programs to help prevent Bullying and promote safe and Inclusive schools;
- 9.1.3. Determine the effectiveness of their programs on an ongoing basis and
- 9.1.4. Build and sustain a positive School Climate.
- 9.2. Schools must share survey results with the school's Safe and Inclusive School Teams to inform the development of the Safe and Inclusive School Plan.
- 9.3. The Superintendent of Safe Schools and Well-Being will track the number of response plan activations and type as outlined in TVDSB Securing Schools and Building Procedure (4008d).
- 9.4. As directed by the Ministry of Education TVDSB tracks and reports the number of Violent Incidents that occur on TVDSB property.

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 and be told of any allegations. 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. 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.

15. 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.

16. Restorative Approaches refers to an approach that centres relationships, community, accountability and finding collaborative solutions in order to build and strengthen relationships, and restore and repair relationships after harm has occurred.

17. Safe and Inclusive Schools Plan refers to the yearly plan developed by the Safe and Inclusive School Team which sets goals and actions in order to create a safer school community. This plan replaces the former Bullying Prevention and Intervention (BPIP) and Safe and Accepting School Plan.

18. 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.

19. Safe Schools Incident refers to any incident in which a negative action or behaviour impacts the sense of safety or belonging of others.

20. School Climate refers to the learning environment and relationships found within a school and school community.

21. 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.

22. 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, visitor and local community organizations.

23. 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).

24. 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.