

Policy Title:**Safe and Caring Schools**

Policy Statement:

The TCSA believes that bullying is serious and the effects can be traumatic and long-lasting. We believe all students, staff, parents, and community members must work together to promote safe and caring schools where students can feel empowered to learn. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that everyone working in our schools is safe, accepted, and valued.

Purpose:

The TCSA supports a whole school approach to bullying that meets the needs of students, respects differences, and provides opportunities for all students to experience success, free of negative factors like bullying. This shall be achieved by establishing and maintaining high expectations for behaviour, while offering early, ongoing and proactive positive and restorative practices, including promoting healthy relationships, mentorship programs, student leadership, direct skill development, early and ongoing intervention, bullying prevention and intervention, conflict prevention and intervention, character development and education, counseling, and the inclusion of social skills in the curriculum.

TCSA recognizes that while anyone can be bullied, some groups are especially vulnerable. With the increasing access to social media, 'cyber bullying' (etc.) can occur to anyone at any time, in and outside school hours. School staff will support families to access community supports as and when needed for incidents of bullying that occur outside of school hours. Where those incidents overlap, schools will work collaboratively with families and other agencies as appropriate.

Definition:

Bullying is a dynamic of unhealthy interaction. Bullying may include social aggression, verbal aggression, physical aggression, sexual harassment, cyberbullying, and intimidation.

The research on bullying to date breaks it down as having three components:

1. It is an intentional negative act that causes harm.
 2. It is repeated. The repetition may be by one individual constantly picking on another or it can involve a larger group, maybe a whole class, harassing one individual.
 3. There is a desire for power or control over another. Usually one person has a distinct advantage of power over the other. The power differential may be a result of a number of advantages, for example, size, strength, age, social status, number of supporters, etc.
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The effects of bullying can include:

- Hurt to a person's body,
 - Damage to belongings,
 - Cause a person to feel badly about themselves,
 - Can make a person feel alone, insecure, and/or not part of a group.
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Procedures:

Implementation - The Director of Education shall implement this policy at all school facilities and functions, and will communicate this policy to the school community and other school stakeholders. Each school shall establish a Safe and Caring School Committee, and develop a Safe Schools Plan that represent the individual school's need but does not supersede this board policy or the Education Act of the Northwest Territories. Each TCSA school will:

- integrate evidence-based healthy relationships programming into the school curriculum and daily classroom activities,
- target the entire learning community including students, parents, staff, community members,
- address specific issues identified by individual schools, provide students with the skills and confidence to resolve conflict in a non-violent way,
- teach students safe intervention and proactive reporting skills, and
- establish a Safe and Caring School Committee.

Each TCSA Safe School Plan must include:

1. Prevention/Bullying Education - TCSA schools shall employ school-wide anti-bullying education that:

- Build a sense of community, inclusiveness, cultural responsiveness, and connection,
- Promote safe, welcoming, respectful, and inclusive climate for learning and working,
- Encourage positive school climate and prevent inappropriate behavior, by helping all members of the school community to develop empathy, and social skills, and
- Communicate the definition of bullying, the impacts of bullying, and the school policy on bullying including how to report bullying.

2. Intervene / Report

Once a staff member is aware of a bullying incident, they shall intervene and/or report to the administrator immediately (or as quickly as reasonably possible). When adults do not intervene a climate of fear develops, reinforcing the belief that bullying will be tolerated.

3. Document

TCSA schools shall have a system in place to document and track incidences of bullying. This may include, but is not limited to; office referral systems, principal files, and/or electronic data systems. When it is appropriate and possible, incidents of bullying that occur outside of school (but which may influence relationships inside of school) shall also be documented.

Authorities:

Education Act: Safe Schools Regulations

Approval Dates:

1st & 2nd Reading – June 8, 2016.

Approved – June 29, 2016.

Chairperson: _____ CEO: _____
