



Promoting Positive School
Climate and Well-being



Preamble

The ALCDSB is dedicated to creating and promoting positive school climate and well-being in all of our schools. Respecting the dignity of all persons by fostering trusting relationships through policies and practices that promote equity, inclusion and diversity are at the core of our Catholic values, the Board's spiritual theme of *Formed in Faith* and our provincial *Catholic Graduate Expectations*. A positive school climate is directly linked to student success and well-being ensuring students are motivated to do well and will realize their full potential. We are committed to sustaining healthy and nurturing communities of belonging that are safe, caring and respectful and built on the principles of restorative practice and progressive discipline.

The ALCDSB and its school communities engage in a whole school approach in putting prevention and intervention strategies in place to facilitate a positive relationship between students, staff, parents and community partners.

I. Education, Awareness, and Outreach

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic School proclaims that all people are created in the image and likeness of God and, as such, have the right to be treated with dignity, respect and fairness. The school further recognizes that a whole-school approach to engaging the school community will help the School's efforts to address inappropriate behaviour.

To these ends, the School will utilise the Ministry of Education definition of bullying in communications with the school community:

In its communication efforts, the School will:

- Make known that a positive school climate is essential for student achievement and well-being;
- Identify the factors that contribute to a safe, inclusive caring and accepting school climate;
- Educate parents and students regarding the differences between bullying, conflict, aggression and teasing;
- Educate parents and students regarding social/emotional well-being, specifically anxiety, self-advocacy and coping strategies;
- Explore and identify the underlying factors that contribute to conflict and/or bullying;
- Work in partnership with parents and the broader school community to build awareness about the resources and pathways available; and
- Be responsive to parental concerns and continue to build relationships and resiliency.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic School will communicate and share with the school community, policies and procedures including the Board/school Code of Conduct, equity and inclusive education policy and guidelines for religious accommodations, procedures to address incidents of discrimination, progressive discipline approach, and promoting positive school climate and well-being.

1. The School will endeavour to increase education, awareness and outreach by using the following best practices:
 - A whole-school approach to creating a safe and caring school;
 - Religious and Family Life Education curriculum focused on building relationships;
 - Develop student clubs to promote student voice and social engagement (*i.e. Board Games Club, Lego Club, French Café, Choir, etc.*);
 - Work collaboratively with the Catholic School Council to ensure school initiatives as outlined in the school improvement plan are implemented;
 - Guest speakers, community partner presentations and children’s entertainers (*i.e. Fred Fox, Queen’s University*) on building and maintaining positive relationships;
 - Roots of Empathy Program;
 - Umbrella Project;
 - Teacher-led Restorative Circles in classes;
 - Restorative Responses and Teaching to specific school incidents (*Responsive Classrooms workshop led by SAT Lori McCaw*); and
 - Develop Student Learner Profiles.
2. The School has identified the following strategies to engage parents in conversations about promoting a positive school climate:
 - Sharing school plan and efforts for positive school climate with Catholic School Council;
 - Using the school’s webpage, School Messenger and Twitter to share good news/success stories and strategies being used in the school; and
 - Promoting regular communication and positive relationships with families.

II. Evaluation of Evidence

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic School recognizes that effective prevention strategies must be evidence-based.

The School will base its interventions, strategies, practices and programs on evidence from the school climate surveys and other relevant information. The School will take the following steps to assess prevention initiatives and strategies:

- Evaluate the evidence to determine the main areas of concern, identify issues in the physical environment, determine current procedures, and assess strategies in place based on results of the school climate surveys and other relevant information;
- Share the updated strategies with the school community via SIPSAW and Catholic School Council Meeting;
- Regular case conference to address changing needs of students; and
- Regular meetings with Educational Assistants to address changing needs of students and supports in place.

Pre-evaluation strategy

1. The School's main issues of concern raised by students, staff and parents in the school climate surveys and based on other relevant information are the following:
 - Promoting resiliency;
 - Working towards engagement for all students (implementation of the UDL model, C3);
 - Promoting appropriate and responsible use of technology; and
 - Need for students and staff to know and recognize regular adults in the building and their roles.
2. The School's areas of focus with respect to the physical environment are:
 - Ensuring supervision of students inside the school and on school property; and
 - Providing coping strategies and a safe space for students who are having difficulty on the yard.
3. The School's current processes for reporting on, responding to, supporting, and following up on issues are as follows:
 - Use of the Board's *Caring and Safe Catholic School Administrative Procedures*; and

- Begin with classroom teacher. Communication with Parents/Guardians, move to administration, continue to communicate with Parents/Guardians (in a timely manner)
4. Based on a review of the school climate survey results and other relevant information, the following areas have shown success/improvement:
 - We have seen an increase in the number of students who feel they have someone at school who consistently provides encouragement and can be turned to for advice.
 5. Based on the school climate survey and other relevant data, the School proposes the following action plan to address areas requiring improvement:

The school will look to continue our work to find engagements that bring together a large number of students who are typically not engaged in school-based activities (e.g.: Lip Dub).

Post-evaluation Strategy

The School will assess the effectiveness of strategies identified in this plan on an ongoing basis through anecdotal professional observations and conversations, as well as learning profiles, to determine how students and staff are feeling at school.

III. Policies and Procedures

The School recognizes that a whole school approach and the policies and procedures of ALCDSB are important for promoting positive school climate and well-being.

The School also recognizes that the goals of policy initiatives must address the areas of challenge identified in school/Board climate surveys and other relevant data.

1. The School will actively communicate its policies, procedures and guidelines to the school community (including involving the school community in the review and/or development of policies, procedures and guidelines relating to Caring and Safe Catholic Schools, by taking the following steps:
 - Posting link to school Code of Conduct, School Climate and Well-being Plan, and SIPSAW on school website;
 - Regularly updating school website with relevant parent communication; and
 - Ensuring that each classroom teacher has identified a platform with which to communicate with parents (e.g. School Messenger, D2L, etc.).
2. The roles/responsibilities of the school community (students, staff, parents, and community members) are as follows:

- To follow the standards of behaviour as outlined in the Code of Conduct <http://schools.alcdsb.on.ca/olmc/Lists/Announcements/AllItems.aspx>; and
- To participate in a whole-school approach to positive school climate in order to ensure that schools are safe, inclusive, and accepting. The Ministry of Education Provincial Parent Guide link: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/code.pdf>.

IV. Prevention

The School recognizes that fostering a positive learning environment will help to reduce possible bullying, harassment, and discrimination incidents. The School is committed to taking steps to strengthen prevention measures.

1. The roles and responsibilities of the Caring and Safe Catholic Schools Team (which will be communicated to the school community) are as follows:
 - Team members are responsible for addressing issues identified in the School Climate Surveys and other related data; and
 - To develop intervention plans that seek to create engagements that promote social well-being, cooperation, respect, kindness and compassion.
2. From its evidence-based analysis, the School has identified the following practices and initiatives for promoting positive school climate and well-being:
 - a) Intervention programs or activities that are evidence-informed and that address the needs identified by the Board or the School:
 - Class Circles; and
 - Implementation of Roots of Empathy program
 - Umbrella Project
 - b) Relationship-building and community-building resources that are present in the school, classroom and in the larger community:
 - Student of Mercy;
 - Promoting connections to caring adults;
 - Peer assistance and mentoring programs;
 - Pastoral ministry; and
 - Youth Workers.
 - c) Activities that promote a positive school climate:

- School-wide focus on gospel values and Catholic Graduate Expectations;
 - School-wide social justice and charity initiatives;
 - Spirit Weeks; and
 - Buddy Program.
- d) Awareness-raising strategies for students, e.g. social-emotional learning, empathy, developing self-regulation skills:
- Roots of Empathy;
 - Zones of Regulation; and
 - Umbrella Project
- e) Awareness-raising strategies to engage community partners and parents in early and ongoing dialogue:
- Presentation to Caring and Safe Catholic Schools Team and School Council on results from School Climate Surveys; and
 - Updates to Stewardship and Discipleship initiatives found in School Improvement Plan.
- f) Strategies for linking curriculum and daily learning for promoting positive school climate and well-being:
- School-wide focus on restorative practice as a whole-school approach;
 - Fully Alive and Minds Up; and
 - Social justice initiatives throughout the year that have students and staff reaching out to and supporting various not-for-profit local organizations.
- g) Strategies to support and encourage role modeling by caring adults and student leaders within the School and school community:
- Catholic Student Council;
 - Zones of Regulation.
 - Roots of Empathy, and
 - School based theme, #BetterTogether / #MieuxEnsemble

3. The School has identified the following learning and training opportunities for school staff and the school community that are needed:
 - Responsive Classrooms workshop;
 - Annual training promoting positive school climate and well-being through the UDL model;
 - Promoting Positive School Climate and Well-being pamphlet for parents (available at the Board's website www.alcdsb.on.ca);
 - Provide time at each staff meeting to attend to issues of mental and physical wellness;
 - Promote social engagements outside of work such as TGIF's; and
 - Provide resources to support staff so that they will be prepared to attend to student wellness – Zones of Regulation, Roots of Empathy, Umbrella Project

V. Interventions and Support Strategies

The School recognizes the importance of using timely interventions and supports with a school-wide approach.

1. To this end, the School will:
 - Use teachable moments within a progressive discipline approach to address inappropriate behaviour, and consider mitigating and other factors;
 - Restorative Practices are in place to support prevention and intervention practices; and
 - Communicate the progressive discipline approach to the school community and the procedures in place to support the student.
2. The School supports the use, in a timely manner and using a whole school approach, of the following evidence-informed interventions and support strategies:
 - Restorative practices;
 - Discussion with Board Social Worker (Mental Health Leader); and
 - Referral of students to school Youth Worker.

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 ("intimidation")

For the purposes of the definition of "bullying" above, behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

Cyber-bullying

For the purposes of the definition of "bullying" above, bullying 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.