

Shawinigan High School

Policy and Plan of Action to Prevent Bullying and Violence

PREAMBLE

At Shawinigan High School, all staff members recognize that a school that is physically and emotionally safe and secure for all students promotes good citizenship, increases student attendance and engagement, and enhances academic achievement. To protect the rights of all students and groups for a safe and secure learning environment, Shawinigan High School prohibits acts of bullying, harassment, and other forms of aggression and violence. Bullying or harassment, like other forms of aggressive and violent behaviors, interferes with both the ability to educate our students and our students' ability to learn. The principal, teachers, professionals, support staff, parents, volunteers, and students are expected to refuse to tolerate bullying, violence and harassment and to demonstrate behavior that is respectful and civil.

Staff members who interact with students shall apply best practices designed to prevent discipline problems and encourage student ability to develop self-discipline and make the best choices in the future.

Since bystander support of bullying or violence can encourage these behaviors, we prohibit both active and passive support for acts of violence or bullying. The staff and school community members should encourage students not to be part of the problem; not to pass on the rumor or derogatory message; not to walk away from these acts when they see them; to constructively attempt to stop them; to report them to the designated authority; and to reach out in friendship to the victim. Periodic classroom meetings should be conducted to teach bystanders how and when to respond to bullying or incidences of violence. Informal classroom discussions and activities designed to provide awareness and increase positive student behaviour will promote a positive shift in peer norms that will support empowered bystanders. When bystanders do report or cooperate in an investigation, they must be protected from retaliation with the same type of procedures used to respond to bullying or violence.

"Bullying" means any repeated direct or indirect behaviour, comment, act or gesture, whether deliberate or not, including in cyberspace, which occurs in a context where there is a power imbalance between the persons concerned and which causes distress and injures, hurts, oppresses, intimidates or ostracizes.

"Violence" means any intentional demonstration of verbal, written, physical, psychological or sexual force which causes distress and injures, hurts or oppresses a person by attacking their psychological or physical integrity or well-being, or their rights or property.

ANALYSIS

According to the Tell Them from Me Survey results from May 25, 2012, this is the situation prevailing in our school with respect to bullying and violence.

Elementary Cycle 3 Students Who State Being Victims of Bullying

Students are subjected to physical, social, or verbal bullying, or are bullied over the Internet.

- 43% of students in this school were victims of moderate to severe bullying in the previous month; the Canada norm for these grades is 24%.
- 50% of the girls and 33% of the boys in this school were victims of moderate to severe bullying in the previous month. The Canada norm for girls is 23% and for boys is 25%.

Elementary Cycle 3 Students Who Feel Safe Attending this School

Students feel safe at school as well as going to and from school.

- 82% of students felt safe attending the school; the Canada norm for these grades is 87%.
- 81% of the girls and 83% of the boys felt safe attending the school. The Canada norm for girls is 89% and for boys is 86%.

Secondary Students Who Report Being Victims of Bullying

Students are subjected to physical, social, or verbal bullying, or are bullied over the Internet.

- 19% of students in this school were victims of moderate to severe bullying in the previous month; the Canada norm for these grades is 23%.
- 17% of the girls and 20% of the boys in this school were victims of moderate to severe bullying in the previous month. The Canada norm for girls is 21% and for boys is 25%.

Secondary Students Who Feel Safe Attending this School

Students feel safe at school as well as going to and from school.

- 93% of students felt safe attending the school; the Canada norm for these grades is 85%.
- 90% of the girls and 95% of the boys felt safe attending the school. The Canada norm for girls is 87% and for boys is 83%.

PREVENTION MEASURES

We believe that a comprehensive curriculum helps students attain knowledge and skills vital to school success, a productive workforce and good citizenship. Critical thinking skills include anticipating consequences of choices, making informed decisions, communicating effectively, resolving conflicts, and developing cultural competency.

We believe that standards for student behavior must be set through interaction among the students, parents and guardians, staff, and community members, producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-discipline and their ability to respect the rights of others. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for school property and the environment on the part of students, staff, parents, and community members.

We believe that the best discipline for aggressive behavior is designed to:

1. Support students in taking responsibility for their actions.
2. Develop empathy.
3. Teach alternative ways to achieve the goals and the solve problems that motivated the aggressive behavior.

Staff members who interact with students shall apply best practices designed to prevent discipline problems and encourage student ability to develop self-discipline and make the best choices in the future.

The Second Step program along with Restorative Circles is an example of two tools used to provide students with a comprehensive ways to develop empathy, support students for taking responsibility for their actions and for teaching alternative ways to achieve goals or solve problems.

Our School Psychologist, Psycho-educator and Guidance Counselor are the Professionals on our team who help us plan activities to provide information to empower and support students at school. This support can be on an individual basis, in a group or in a classroom setting.

MEASURES TO ENCOURAGE PARENT COLLABORATION

This policy has been approved by members of the Shawinigan High School Governing Board and will be distributed to all families in order to provide parents with the information necessary to be able to support their child/children, in preventing and stopping bullying and violence and in creating a healthy and safe learning environment.

Parents are encouraged to report bullying or violence to the school principal.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING

Students who are victims or are witnesses of bullying or violence must report the incident to a member of the school personnel. The school principal must be made aware of the situation as soon as possible so that measures can be taken to record the incident. The principal will need to collect information on the incident prior to making a decision as to the actions that need to be taken.

For information on the School Discipline Policy, please refer to the policy found in your child's agenda and on our school website.

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

The school principal is responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy. In so doing, the principal shall conduct a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of each alleged incident. The investigation is to be completed within three school days after a report or complaint is made.

This policy also prohibits any person from falsely accusing another as a means of bullying or harassment. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person found to have falsely accused another as a means of bullying or harassment may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or recommendation of expulsion to the school board.

Students who are suspended for acts of violence or bullying must be accompanied by their parent in order to meet with the school principal or the designated authority prior to returning to classes.

Once an incident is reported to the school principal, an investigation will take place and the victim, the alleged perpetrator and witnesses will be met on an individual basis to record the events that led up to the incident.

MEASURES TO PROTECT CONFIDENTIALITY

Every effort will be made to ensure the confidentiality of individual testimonies. Any complaint or report is confidential and is vital in the pursuit of finding an accurate and unbiased account of the incident.

A "Concerns" box that will serve for confidential reports or complaints about bullying or violence will be placed by the principal's office to allow students to voice their concerns in writing. This must be taken seriously by all students and students should not take this lightly and use this reporting tool to make false accusations or to get someone in trouble without a valid reason.

Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

SUPERVISORY OR SUPPORT MEASURES

All staff is responsible for protecting the victim and witnesses of incidences of violence or bullying. This supervision includes the classrooms, school yard, hallways, cafeteria, Games Room, Resource Room, Computer Lab, Science Lab, and Daycare. The school team may also decide to provide the alleged perpetrator with close supervision at all times in order to keep the student from retaliating.

DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a student who engages in one or more acts of bullying, violence or harassment may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Consequences for a student who commits an act of bullying and harassment shall vary in method and severity according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors, and must be consistent with the Shawinigan High School Discipline Policy and Code of Conduct. Remedial measures shall be designed to: correct the problem behavior; prevent another occurrence of the behavior; and protect the victim of the act.

FOLLOW-UP ON REPORT OR COMPLAINT

The parents of all students involved, this includes both the victim and the alleged perpetrator, shall be informed on the outcome of the investigation. The victim will also be supported in the process and be offered professional services. All reports on instances of bullying or violence must be recorded by the school for monthly and annual data review.