

Caring and Safe Schools

The Caring and Safe Schools team of administrators, advisors, child and youth counsellors, court liaison workers, office staff, elementary and secondary program itinerant teachers, child and youth workers and educational assistants provide a wide range of information and support on proactive programming. They also provide advice and support during incidents at schools. The guiding principles of Caring and Safe Schools include:

1. Respect for human rights and the promotion of values and skills needed for a peaceful, responsible and democratic society;
2. A school climate that is equitable, inclusive and fair;
3. Academic programming where students have the right to learn and achieve success;
4. Practices that support healthy student, staff and school community relationships;
5. An integrated approach to progressive discipline that enhances students' ability to learn and build their leadership and engagement;
6. A commitment to implementing prevention and intervention strategies to address bullying, cyber-bullying, discrimination, harassment, gender-based violence and violence in any form;
7. A Code of Conduct that all students, staff, parents, community members and permit holders are expected to adhere to;
8. The use of the data collected through anonymous School Climate Surveys to review procedures and revise existing school improvement plans, and
9. A clear process for reporting and responding to any behaviour that would have a negative impact on school climate.



Education Act Amendments

In February 2010, the *Education Act* was amended to require that all school staff report incidents that could lead to suspension or expulsion to the principal of the school. The reporting forms associated to this duty can be found on the Caring and Safe Schools' website under "Forms and Letters" and are also attached as appendices to PR697: Promoting a Positive School Climate. The duty for principals to contact the parents of all students involved in such an incident was also introduced in the 2010 amendments. Additionally, the 2010 amendments to the *Education Act* included the duty for staff who work directly with students to respond to incidents that have a negative impact on school climate in accordance with applicable policies and guidelines established by the Ministry of Education and the TDSB.

The *Education Act* was further amended through Bill 13, the *Accepting Schools Act*, 2012, which came into force on September 1, 2012. One of the key amendments to the *Education Act* included the requirement for a principal to suspend a student (pending a possible recommendation for expulsion) for any activity listed in subsection 306(1) of the *Education Act* that is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other similar factor.

School-Based Caring, Safe and Accepting Schools Teams

Provincial legislation states that each school must have a caring, safe and accepting schools team responsible for fostering a safe, inclusive and accepting school climate. This team must be composed of at least one student (where appropriate), one parent, one teacher, one non-teaching staff member, one community partner and the Principal. An existing school committee can assume this role. The chair of the team must be a staff member. In the TDSB, a Caring, Safe and Accepting Schools Team should include your Equity Representative and your Positive Spaces Representative.

This team can meet to discuss a variety of issues related to creating a positive school climate. The team should annually review and update the school Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (found in the Community, Culture and Caring pillar of the School Improvement plan), the school Progressive Discipline plan and the School Code of Conduct.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plans

A caring, safe, inclusive and accepting school climate is essential for student achievement and well-being. For students to reach their full potential, students must feel safe, included and engaged in school. Schools are required to have a Bullying Prevention and Intervention plan. This plan should be part of your School Improvement Plan (SIP) under the Community Culture and Care Pillar. Elements of a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan include:

- Education, Awareness and Outreach;
- The use of data to assess, monitor, evaluate and update;
- The use of TDSB Policies and Procedures;
- Prevention Strategies, and
- Intervention and Support Strategies.

Caring and Safe Schools Professional Learning Opportunities

Principals and Vice Principals are required to participate in the training exercise ***Understanding Bill 13, “the Accepting Schools Act” and Bullying Prevention and Intervention*** which can be accessed through KEY to Learn.

We are pleased to inform you that, in conjunction with TPS and TCDSB, we have been given ten spaces per session for Principals or Vice-Principals to attend Threat Assessment Awareness Training. The dates for these sessions are December 11, 2014, March 9, 2015, April 13, 2015 and April 23, 2015. There is no coverage available. If you are interested in attending please email Donna Day at donna.day@tdsb.on.ca to reserve your spot. Spaces will be allocated on a first come first serve basis. All of the sessions are being offered at the TCDSB A.P.P.L.E. Program site at 55 Salisbury Ave., Toronto.

Contact Us

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Should you have any questions about any of the information contained within this newsletter please speak to your Area Caring and Safe Schools Administrator.