



Niagara Catholic District School Board

PROGRESSIVE STUDENT DISCIPLINE

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

300 – Schools/Students

No 302.6.9

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In keeping with the Mission, Vision and Values of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, the following are the Administrative Operational Procedures for Progressive Student Discipline.

PREAMBLE

The Board is committed to promoting appropriate student behaviour that supports a positive school climate and a safe, inclusive, and accepting learning environment. This environment allows all students to reach their full potential and become living witnesses of Christ. A positive school climate exists when all members of the community feel safe, included, and respected, and when positive behaviours and interactions are actively encouraged.

Progressive discipline is a whole-school approach requiring all staff to address inappropriate student behaviour. Strategies may include prevention programs, early and ongoing interventions, supports, consequences, reporting serious incidents, and responding to behaviours such as bullying and cyberbullying. Responses must be developmentally appropriate, consider a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and mitigating factors, and focus on building skills for healthy relationships. In serious cases, suspension or expulsion may be considered. Each school will implement the Board Code of Conduct and school-wide progressive discipline procedures.

Administrators, staff, parents/guardians, and community members share responsibility for supporting a positive school climate by reporting and responding to inappropriate behaviour. Programs and services that promote healthy relationships, safe and inclusive learning, faith and character development, and positive peer relations form the foundation of this work. To evaluate progress, voluntary and anonymous climate surveys will be conducted at least once every two years.

Board employees who work directly with students must respond to behaviour that negatively affects the school climate, including bullying, swearing, discriminatory slurs, sexist jokes, graffiti, or vandalism. Employees are not required to intervene when it would cause immediate physical harm, but serious incidents must always be reported to the principal in writing through the Online Reporting Tool. For other incidents where it is unsafe to intervene, staff must notify the principal as soon as possible.

Appropriate staff responses may include asking a student to stop the behaviour, naming the behaviour and explaining why it is inappropriate, requiring corrective action such as an apology, or taking steps to ensure the safety of all involved.

PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING POSITIVE STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

Activities, practices and strategies that focus on the building of healthy relationships, a safe, inclusive, and accepting learning and teaching environment, and positive peer relations provide the foundation for a positive school climate, include, but are not limited to:

- bullying prevention and intervention initiatives, programs and supports
- citizenship development

- faith and character education
- mentorship programs
- promoting healthy student relationships and lifestyles
- student leadership
- student success strategies

BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT PRACTICES

Behaviour management practices include, but are not limited to:

- behaviour support plans and safety plans
- class placement
- conflict resolution/dispute resolution
- individual, peer and group counselling
- mentorship programs
- positive encouragement and reinforcement
- program modifications or accommodations
- promotion of healthy student relationships and lifestyles
- school, Board and community support programs
- sensitivity programs
- student success strategies

EARLY AND ONGOING INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Early interventions are opportunities for students to self-assess and self-regulate with support from both the school and home. Early intervention strategies may include, but are not limited to:

- contact and ongoing communication with the student's parents/guardians
- verbal reminders
- review of expectations
- written work assignment with a learning component that requires reflection
- volunteer service to the school community
- peer mentoring
- referral to counselling
- conflict mediation and resolution and/or consultation

An ongoing intervention strategy may include, but is not limited to:

- meeting with the student's parents/guardians
- requiring the student to perform volunteer service in the school community
- conflict mediation
- peer mentoring
- sensitivity program
- safety plans/behaviour support plans/planned safe physical intervention
- a referral to counselling

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE STRATEGIES FOR RESPONDING TO INAPPROPRIATE STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

Appropriate actions must address behaviours that are contrary to the provincial Code of Conduct which include, but are not limited to: sexual misconduct, gender-based violence, homophobia, and harassment on the basis of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, colour, ethnicity, culture, citizenship, ancestry, origin, religion, creed, family status, socio-economic status, disability and/or any other immutable characteristic or ground protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Appropriate actions must also address behaviours that are contrary to the Board Code of Conduct: Treat one another in a Christ-like manner with dignity and respect at all times, regardless of one's age, marital status, family status, disability, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnicity, citizenship, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, always respecting and upholding the values and teachings of our Catholic faith. Progressive discipline applies to digital environments, including online learning platforms, social media, and electronic communications. Inappropriate behaviour in these spaces will be addressed in accordance with Board policies.

The Board authorizes principals to impose appropriate consequences. Mitigating and other factors, including expectations documented in a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) must be considered in the determination of interventions, supports and consequences in order to reinforce positive behaviours and help students make good choices. Responses should be trauma-informed and culturally responsive, recognizing the intersectionality of student identities.

The principal and staff will also consider the following to address inappropriate behaviour:

- the particular student and circumstances;
- the nature and severity of the behaviour; and
- the impact on the school climate, including the impact on students or other individuals in the community.

Mitigating and Other Factors

The principal, in determining consequences shall consider the following mitigating factors:

1. whether the student has the ability to control the behaviour;
2. whether the student has the ability to understand the foreseeable consequences of the behaviour; and
3. whether the student's continuing presence in the school does or does not create an unacceptable risk to the safety of any other individual at the school.

The principal, in determining consequences shall also consider the following other factors:

1. the student's academic, discipline and personal history;
2. whether a progressive discipline approach has been used with the student; whether the activity for which the student might be disciplined was related to any harassment of the student because of race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation or harassment for any other reason;
3. how the discipline would affect the student's ongoing education;
4. the age of the student;
5. where the student has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or disability related needs,
 - i. whether the behaviour was a manifestation of a disability identified in the student's Individual Education Plan;
 - ii. whether appropriate individualized accommodation has been provided; and
 - iii. whether a suspension is likely to result in aggravating or worsening the student's behaviour or conduct; and
6. other matters as the principal considers appropriate.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORTS AND CONSEQUENCES

Positive Behaviour Supports and consequences may include, but are not limited to:

- meeting with the student's parents/guardians, the student and the principal
- providing counselling and mental health supports (with parental consent, where applicable)
- problem solving with students to identify alternative behaviour choices,
- helping students deal with conflict and learning how to manage emotions
- using restorative practices to repair harm to people/relationships (with parental permission),
- resolving conflict through discussion and understanding the harm that has been caused to others as a result of the student's behaviour,

- in-kind restitution (determined by the principal) that permits the student to help to restore or improve the school environment either by directly addressing the student's behaviour (e.g., in cases of vandalism students can work to undo damage they have caused), or by having the student improve the school environment more broadly,
- equipping children with the social-emotional and communication skills needed to manage themselves, resolve conflict and develop healthy behaviour.
- detentions
- suspension
- expulsion

DISCLOSURE OF STUDENTS' PERSONAL INFORMATION

Board employees, including occasional and itinerant employees, who work directly with students, may need to know about a particular student's behaviour(s) that poses a potential risk of physical harm to school staff or students, as documented as part of progressive discipline in the Ontario Student Record (OSR).

Prior to disclosure, principals are to inform staff that they must treat any information disclosed about a student or incident as confidential.

Principals are only permitted to share information documented in the OSR with Board employees who do not have access to the OSR, if disclosure is necessary, so that employees can carry out their duties, including their duty to respond to inappropriate and disrespectful student behaviour. Principals may share only the necessary information pertaining to behaviour that may present risk of physical harm.

SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS

The Board provides supports for all students who are affected by serious student incidents and all inappropriate behaviour, and for those who engage in these types of incidents, to assist them in developing healthy relationships, making good choices that support continuing their learning, and achieving success. Board employees, through Board programs and resource personnel, or through community-based service providers, including social service agencies and mental health service providers may provide these supports.

The Board shall ensure that principals support students who have been harmed or students who have engaged in serious student incidents by developing specific plans to protect students who have been harmed. If parents/guardians are not satisfied with the supports provided, principals will refer parents/guardians to the Board Complaint Resolution Policy No. 800.3.

SCHOOL TRANSFERS RELATED TO SCHOOL SAFETY

In cases where students are being transferred to another school in order to preserve school safety, a "transfer meeting" will be coordinated between the school from which the student is being transferred and the receiving school. The purpose of the transfer meeting is to put in place a transition strategy to identify any additional supports and resources that the student may require.

The meeting must include the teachers and other school staff that will have regular direct contact with the student. The student that is being moved and their parents/guardians should also be invited and reasonably accommodated to participate in the transfer meeting. The transfer meeting must occur prior to the day, or on the day, the student is transferred before the student attends any classes.

The receiving school must also be in possession of the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR) prior to the transfer meeting, and the OSR must be available at the meeting. The principal must inform all staff in attendance that they must treat any information about the student and the incident disclosed at the meeting as confidential.

NOTIFYING PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Principals are required to notify parents/guardians of a student who has been harmed as a result of a serious student incident promptly. When notifying parents/guardians of these incidents, a principal must invite parents/guardians to have a discussion with them about the supports that will be provided for their student.

Principals shall disclose the following information:

- the nature of the activity that resulted in harm to the student,
- the nature of the harm to the student,
- the steps taken to protect the student's safety, including the nature of any disciplinary measures taken in responses to the activity, and
- the supports that will be provided for the student in response to the harm that resulted from the activity.

Principals are required to notify the parents/guardians of students who have engaged in serious student incidents and shall disclose the following information:

- the nature of the activity that resulted in harm to the student,
- the nature of the harm to the student,
- the nature of any disciplinary measures taken in responses to the activity, and
- the supports that will be provided for the students in response to the harm that resulted from the activity.

The principal shall not notify the parents/guardians of a student, if, in the opinion of the principal, doing so would put the student at risk of harm from the parents/guardians of the student, such that notification is not in the best interests of the student. The principal will document the rationale for this decision, and notify both the teacher who reported the incident and the appropriate Family of Schools' Superintendent.

REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS-APPENDIX A

In certain situations, members of the College of Psychologists of Ontario or the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers who engaged in a clinical relationship with a student shall report incidents of behaviour for which suspension/expulsion must be considered to the principal as soon as it is, in their professional opinion, reasonably possible to do so without having a negative impact on the nature of the clinical relationship, in accordance with section 300.2 of Part XIII of the *Education Act*. They shall also report, in a manner that is consistent with the code of ethics and the standards of practice of their respective professions matters that could result in the student doing physical, emotional, or psychological harm to themselves or to others.

REPORTING SERIOUS STUDENT INCIDENTS

The purpose of reporting serious student incidents is to ensure that the principal is made aware of activities that may require consideration of suspension/ or expulsion under the *Education Act* and to support the maintenance of a safe, inclusive, and positive school climate.

Any Board employee who becomes aware that a student may have engaged in a serious incident is required by law to report the matter to the principal as soon as reasonably possible. Where immediate action is necessary, a verbal report to the principal must be made right away, followed by a written report submitted no later than the end of the school day.

[Online Reporting Tool](#)

1. All incident reports, including those made verbally, must be confirmed in writing and submitted to the principal through the [Online Reporting Tool](#) in a timely manner and no later than the end of the school day.

2. Where the principal is the sole witness to a serious student incident, the principal must complete an incident report through the [Online Reporting Tool](#).
3. Each incident report will be assigned a number for filing and retrieval purposes and investigated by the principal.

Written Acknowledgement

The principal must provide the person who reported the serious student incident with written acknowledgement, through the [Online Reporting Tool](#), and must specify whether the investigation has been completed or is still in progress. The principal will not provide information that could identify the student(s) involved.

Once the investigation is complete, the principal:

- must communicate the results of the investigation to the teacher who submitted the incident report,
- will communicate the results of the investigation to the individual who submitted the incident report, who is not teacher, only if the principal considers it appropriate, and
- must not disclose more personal information than is reasonably necessary for the purpose of communicating the results of the investigation.

ONTARIO STUDENT RECORD (OSR)

If the principal has decided that action must be taken as a result of an incident, the principal will file a copy of the incident report that was submitted through the [Online Reporting Tool](#), along with documentation (i.e., suspension, expulsion letter, police report) in the Ontario Student Record (OSR) of the student whose behaviour was inappropriate.

1. Where the principal has taken action in the case of more than one student, a copy of the incident report, along with documentation indicating the action taken must be filed in the OSR of each student whose behaviour was inappropriate. The names of all other students that appear on the incident report must be removed before it is filed.
2. In the case of a student who has been harmed, no information about the incident must be placed in the OSR, unless that student's parents/guardians expressly request that it be placed in the OSR.
3. In situations where the student who has been harmed has also engaged in a serious student incident, information regarding the incident and the action taken will be placed in the student's OSR.
4. The incident report and documentation must be kept for a minimum of one year in the OSR.
5. In the case of a violent incident, the principal must check the Violent Incident Box on the student's discipline tab in the Student Management System. A copy of the Violent Incident Form printed from the Student Management System and any other documentation (i.e., a copy of the incident report that was submitted through the [Online Reporting Tool](#), suspension/expulsion letter, police report) must be filed and retained in the student's OSR for:
 - one year, if the student's suspension was quashed or withdrawn and the record of suspension expunged.
 - three years, if the student was suspended for the violent incident and no further suspensions for serious violent incidents have taken place.
 - five years, if the student was expelled for the violent incident and no further suspensions for serious violent incidents have taken place.
6. For non-violent incidents, if no further action is taken by the principal, the principal is not required to retain the report.

MAINTENANCE OF THE ONTARIO STUDENT RECORD (OSR)

The contents of the Ontario Student Records (OSRs) should be reviewed on a regular basis by the principal for the removal of any material that is no longer required to be retained to ensure that they remain conducive to the improvement of the instruction of a student.

STUDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The principal shall document student discipline on the Board Student Management System under the incident area tab with the following information:

- Type of infraction
- Check Violent Incident Box, if applicable
- Student Incident Details
- Consequences
- Appeal/Outcome Information, if applicable

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY REGARDING DISCIPLINE

Part XIII of the *Education Act* provides a principal with the authority to delegate powers, duties or functions.

Vice-Principals

Delegation may include all authority of the principal except:

- the final decision, regarding a recommendation to the Board to expel a student, and
- the authority to suspend a student for six or more school days.

Teachers

The authority of the principal may only be delegated in writing to a teacher in the absence of the principal and vice-principal, and must respect the terms of all applicable collective agreements.

- Teachers may be delegated the authority to initially deal with situations involving activities that occur that must be considered for suspension/expulsion. The teacher must report all details of their investigation to the principal as soon as possible.
- The teacher must report to the principal any activities that must be considered for suspension/expulsion that are received from staff or others during the absence of the principal and vice-principal. A teacher may not be delegated authority regarding suspension decisions or recommendations regarding expulsion of students.
- A teacher may be delegated limited authority to contact the parents/guardians of a student who has been harmed as a result of a serious student incident and the parents/guardians of the student who has engaged in the activity. The information provided to the parents/guardians by a teacher must be limited to the nature of the harm to the student and the nature of the activity that resulted in the harm.
- The teacher must not be delegated the authority to discuss the nature of any discipline measures taken in response to the activity.
- If the teacher is not sure whether to call the parents/guardians, the teacher should contact the principal or the appropriate Family of Schools' Superintendent for direction. The principal will follow up with the parents/guardians as soon as possible.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS AND OTHER SCHOOL STAFF

Creating and sustaining a safe, inclusive and accepting learning environment through appropriate interactions between all members of the school community is the responsibility of the whole school community.

The Board will provide professional development for staff to support prevention of inappropriate student behaviour and strategies for promoting positive school climate. Training may include but is not limited to, Board policy awareness, curriculum connections related to bullying prevention and intervention, social and emotional skills, critical and creative thinking skills to help students develop health relationships responding to serious student incidents, including inappropriate sexual behaviour and duty to report under the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

Relationships that engage the whole school community and its partners promote a positive school environment and support the progressive discipline approach. These partnerships facilitate the delivery of prevention, intervention and response programs, the use of referral processes, and the provisions of services and support for students, their parents/guardians and families.

To facilitate the building of partnerships the Board shall:

- direct schools to work with community-based service providers, mental health agencies, or other organizations that have professional expertise in the areas of bullying, discrimination, violence, and harassment to provide appropriate support to students, parents/guardians, teachers and other school staff in addressing these issues;
- maintain an up-to-date contact list of community-based service providers that have professional expertise in these areas, making the list available to staff, parents/guardians, and students; and
- work in partnership with, and provide access to, public health units in order to support implementation of the Ontario curriculum together with mandated public health policies.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

It is important that all members of the school community, including teachers, other school staff, students, and parents/guardians understand and support the progressive discipline approach. To support a whole-school approach the Board communicates Governance Policies and Administrative Operational Procedures to all students, parents/guardians, staff members, volunteers, the Special Education Advisory Committee, the Indigenous Education Advisory Council, the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee and Catholic School Councils and other community partners.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Board will continue to monitor, review, and evaluate the effectiveness of Board Governance Policies and Administrative Operational Procedures using indicators established, in consultation with students, parents/guardians, staff members, the Special Education Advisory Committee, the Indigenous Education Advisory Council, the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee and Catholic School Councils and community-based service providers.

Programs, supports, and services that focus on the building of healthy relationships, a safe, inclusive and accepting learning environment, faith and character development, and positive peer relations provide the foundation for an effective continuum of strategies within a school and at school-related activities or events.

As part of the monitoring and evaluation process, voluntary and anonymous school climate surveys for students, staff, and parents/guardians will be conducted at least once every two years and schools will annually develop a School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan to include with their School Student Achievement Plan.

References:

- [*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005*](#)
- [*Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario: Supporting Students with Special Education Needs through Progressive Discipline, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2010*](#)
- [*Education Act and Regulations*](#)
- [*English Language Learners: ESL \(English as a Second Language\) ELD \(English Literacy Development\) Programs and Services, 2007*](#)
- [*Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*](#)
- [*Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009*](#)
- [*Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework, 2007*](#)

- [Ontario Human Rights Code](#)
- [Ontario Student Record \(OSR\) Guideline, 2000 \(Revised 2020\)](#)
- [Policy/Program Memorandum 120: Reporting Violent Incidents to the Ministry of Education](#)
- [Policy/Program Memorandum 124: The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct-Issued October 17, 2018](#)
- [Policy/Program Memorandum 144: Bullying Prevention and Intervention-Issued October 17, 2018](#)
- [Policy/Program Memorandum 145: Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour –Issued October 17, 2018](#)
- [Regulation 472/07: Behaviour, Discipline and Safety of Pupils](#)
- [Child, Youth and Family Services Act 2017](#)
- [Smoke-Free Ontario Act 2017](#)
- [Niagara Catholic District School Board Policies/Procedures](#)
 - [Access to Board Premises \(302.6.3\) AOP](#)
 - [Accessibility Standards Policy \(800.8\)](#)
 - [Accessibility Customer Service Policy \(800.8.1\)](#)
 - [Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy \(302.6.8\)](#)
 - [Catholic School Councils \(800.1\) AOP](#)
 - [Code of Conduct Policy \(302.6.2\)](#)
 - [Complaint Resolution Policy \(800.3\)](#)
 - [Dress Code – Secondary Uniform Policy \(302.6.6\)](#)
 - [Electronic Communications System \(Students\) \(301.5\) AOP](#)
 - [Elementary Standardized Dress Code Policy-Safe Schools \(302.6.10\)](#)
 - [Equity and Inclusive Education Policy \(100.10\)](#)
 - [Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Policy \(800.7\)](#)
 - [Ontario Student Record \(301.7\) AOP](#)
 - [Privacy Policy \(600.6\)](#)
 - [Records and Information Management Policy \(600.2\)](#)
 - [Safe Physical Intervention with Students \(301.8\) AOP](#)
 - [Safe and Accepting Schools Policy \(302.6\)](#)
 - [Student Expulsion Policy \(302.6.5\)](#)
 - [Student Suspension \(302.6.4\) AOP](#)
 - [Student Transportation Policy \(500.2\)](#)
 - [Protocol between Niagara Catholic District School Board and Family and Children's Services Niagara](#)
 - [Protocol Between the Niagara Regional Police Service and the Niagara Catholic District School Board](#)

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