



MOOSONEE DISTRICT SCHOOL AREA BOARD

BOARD GOVERNANCE POLICY

Motion	2016-05-010
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Review Date	

SAFE SCHOOLS

1. PURPOSE

Moosonee District School Area Board is committed to a whole school approach to creating a safe, caring, equitable, and inclusive school environment for all students, staff members, and members of the school community.

The goal of this governance policy is to support a positive learning and working climate for all members of the school community, with a particular focus on supporting all students in developing healthy relationships, making good choices, continuing their learning, and achieving success.

2. DEFINITIONS

School Climate: School climate refers to the environment, values, and relationships found within a school. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included, and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions.

Codes of Conduct: The Board has established codes of conduct that set out standards of behaviour for students, staff, parents/guardians, and trustees. The Board also directs principals, in conjunction with members of the school council, to develop a school Code of Conduct clarifying acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour for all members of the school community.

Progressive Discipline: Progressive discipline is a whole-school approach that uses a continuum of prevention programs, interventions, supports, and consequences to address inappropriate student behaviour and to build upon strategies that promote and foster positive behaviours.

Bullying: Bullying means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a student that is intended to cause (or should be known to cause) harm, fear, or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social, or academic harm, or harm to the individual's reputation or property. Bullying creates a negative environment for another individual and occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance.

Cyber-bullying: Cyber-bullying is using electronic means to intimidate, harm, exclude, or ruin a reputation. Cyber-bullying includes the use of e-mails and instant messaging,

text or digital imaging sent on cell phones, web pages and blogs, chat rooms, and discussion groups to spread rumours, images, or hurtful comments.

Mitigating and Other Factors: Mitigating and other factors must be taken into account when discipline is being considered. These factors are described in Ontario Regulation 472/07 Behaviour, Discipline and Safety of Pupils.

Suspension: A suspension means a student is removed from school and school activities for a specific period of time ranging from one school day to 20 school days. A student who is suspended for more than five school days is considered to be on long-term suspension and may participate in a program for suspended students.

Expulsion: Expelled students are removed from school and school activities for an indefinite time period. The board offers a program for expelled students which must be completed before the student returns to school.

Discipline Committee of the Board: The Discipline Committee of the board is a committee of at least three members of the board designated to determine suspension appeals and recommendations for expulsion.

3. POLICY

3.1 Positive School Climate

- a) The Board acknowledges the impact of the school climate on student and staff success and is committed to fostering a positive school environment through practices that support healthy student, staff, and school community relationships.
- b) The Board recognizes that everyone has a role to play in creating a positive school climate and in preventing inappropriate behaviour, such as bullying, discrimination, harassment, and violence.
- c) Ontario legislation creates clear expectations for behaviour which apply to students whether on school property, on buses, at school-related events or activities, or in other circumstances that have an impact on school climate. Legislation outlines strategies and consequences to be used to reduce incidents of inappropriate behaviour.
- d) The Board endorses a progressive approach to discipline in schools that is appropriate to meeting the developmental, individual, and special needs of all students. This approach includes a continuum of supports, interventions, learning opportunities, and consequences.
- e) The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code* have primacy over provincial legislation and Board policies and procedures, such that the *Education Act*, Ontario Regulations, Ministry of Education Program/Policy Memoranda and Moosonee District School Area Board policies and administrative procedures are subject to and shall be interpreted and applied in accordance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

- f) This Board policy is supported with administrative procedures specific to the school code of conduct, progressive discipline, bullying prevention and intervention, suspensions, and expulsions. Additional administrative procedures may be developed in support of this policy to address legislative requirements.
- g) The Board recognizes that discipline of students begins at home with parents who are the first and primary educators for their children. This includes responsibility for social development, behaviour, and discipline. The Board encourages a partnership with parents in the support of students' social, emotional and academic growth.

3.2 Prevention and Intervention

- a) Moosonee District School Area Board believes that students, the staff, and the community have the right to learn and work in a healthy, non-threatening environment free from physical and psychological violence.
- b) The Board supports the use of prevention practices as a foundation for a healthy environment. These practices include character development, Student Success strategies, anti-bullying and violence prevention programs, citizenship development, student leadership, and healthy lifestyle initiatives. These positive measures involve the whole school and school community.
- c) Prevention and intervention measures also include effective behaviour management practices such as program modifications or accommodations; appropriate class placement; positive encouragement and reinforcement; individual, peer and group counselling; conflict resolution; mentorship; safety plans; and school and community support programs.

3.3 Progressive Discipline

- a) The Board supports the use of progressive discipline that promotes positive student behaviour and is appropriate to meet the developmental, individual, and special needs of all students.
- b) The Board believes that every student has the right to an education without disruption, along with the equally important responsibility to not deny this right to any other student.
- c) The Board expects that a firm and fair application of the school and Board codes of conduct shall prevail in all matters related to Moosonee District School Area Board, including all school activities and Board business.
- d) The Board requires a response to all inappropriate student behaviour. The Board supports the staff in the use of a continuum of practices that include predictable and supportive consequences to inappropriate behaviours that are contrary to the provincial or school codes of conduct.

3.4 Bullying

- a) Part XIII of the *Education Act* includes bullying with other inappropriate student activities that may lead to suspension, or lead to a principal's recommendation to the Board for expulsion.
- b) The Board believes that bullying adversely affects pupils' ability to learn, healthy relationships, and the school climate as well as a school's ability to educate its pupils.
- c) Bullying will not be accepted on school property, at school-related activities, on school buses, and in any other circumstances (e.g., online) where engaging in bullying will have a negative impact on pupils and the school climate.

3.5 Suspension and Expulsion

- a) In order to meet the goal of creating a safe and caring school environment, the Board supports the use of positive practices as well as consequences for inappropriate behaviour, when necessary.
- b) The Board will deal with suspension of pupils in accordance with the Part XIII of the *Education Act*, related Regulations, and Memoranda.
- c) The Board will deal with expulsions of pupils in accordance with Part XIII of the *Education Act*, related Regulations, and Memoranda.
- d) In considering whether to suspend a student or to recommend to the Board that a student be expelled, a principal shall take into account any mitigating or other factors prescribed by the regulations.

3.6 Appeals and Hearings

- a) The Board recognizes its duties and powers to decide upon appeals of student suspensions and to decide upon a principal's recommendations for expulsion. In exercising these duties and powers, the Board interprets the provisions of the *Education Act* and Regulations in a broad and liberal manner consistent with the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.
- b) The Board authorizes a Discipline Committee of the Board to conduct appeals of student suspensions and hearings of recommendations for student expulsion. The Board formally delegates to the Discipline Committee the powers set out in the *Education Act*, Regulations under the *Act*, and the *Statutory Powers Procedure Act* to implement any appropriate order and to make decisions on behalf of the Board.
- c) In the case of an appeal of a suspension, the Discipline Committee of the Board shall follow the directives in Board Policy GOV-17 Appeals and Hearings Regarding Student Discipline. In accordance with this policy, the Discipline Committee will either: confirm the suspension and its duration; confirm the suspension but shorten its duration, even if the suspension has already been served, and order that the

record of the suspension be amended accordingly; or quash the suspension and order that the record be expunged, even if the suspension has already been served.

- d) The decision of the Discipline Committee is final.
- e) In the case of an expulsion hearing, the Discipline Committee of the Board will follow the directives in Board Policy GOV-17 Appeals and Hearings Regarding Student Discipline. In accordance with this policy, the Discipline Committee shall conduct a hearing to review the submissions and views of the parties and shall consider whether the decision to expel and the type of expulsion recommended by the principal are reasonable in the circumstances. The Board shall decide whether or not to expel the student.
- f) A student's parent/guardian or adult student may appeal a Board's decision to expel a student to the Child and Family Services Review Board in accordance with procedures set out by the Ministry of Education. The decision of the Child and Family Services Review Board is final.
- g) The Board provides programs for students who are on long-term suspension and for expelled students. The programs support students in both academic and non-academic areas.

4. ADDITIONAL EXPECTATIONS

- 4.1 The Board expects that each school will establish a student dress code in consultation with the School Council and the principal.
- 4.2 The Board expects staff and students to maintain the highest standards of respectful and responsible behaviour when using all information technologies.
- 4.3 A student who commits an act of vandalism or theft may be required to provide restitution. The Board supports the suspension of any student who is deemed responsible for an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property for a period of time commensurate with the seriousness of the offence.
- 4.4 The Board supports ongoing information sharing between school officials and justice system personnel within the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**Legal:**

Education Act, Section 169.1: Board Powers and Duties: Positive School Climate
Education Act, Part XIII Behaviour, Discipline and Safety of Pupils
Ontario Regulation 472/07 Behaviour, Discipline and Safety of Pupils: Mitigating Factors
Ontario Regulation 474/00 Access to School Premises
The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct
The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Ontario Human Rights Code
The Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Occupational Health and Safety Act
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005
Statutory Powers Procedure Act
Youth Criminal Justice Act.
PPM No. 119 Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies 2009, revised 2013
PPM No. 120 Reporting Violent Incidents to the Ministry of Education
PPM No. 128 The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct
PPM No. 141 School Board Programs for Students on Long-term Suspension
PPM No. 142 School Board Programs for Expelled Students
PPM No. 144 Bullying Prevention and Intervention
PPM No. 145 Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour

Board:

Board Policy GOV-01 Board Philosophy, Goals, and Values
Board Policy GOV-02 Strategic Directions
Board Policy GOV-07-0 Equity and Inclusive Education
Board Policy GOV-09 Safe Schools: School Code of Conduct
Board Policy GOV-15 Code of Conduct: Board Members
Board Policy GOV-17 Appeals and Hearings Regarding Student Discipline
Board Policy GOV-21 Access to School Premises
Board Policy GOV-22 Vandalism
Administrative Procedure 376 Progressive Student Discipline
Administrative Procedure 377 Student Discipline: Bullying
Administrative Procedure 378 Student Discipline: Suspension
Administrative Procedure 379 Student Discipline: Expulsion