



PROCEDURE

SO-011

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE AND PROMOTING POSITIVE STUDENT BEHAVIOUR	
Superintendent Responsible: Superintendent of Education, Safe and Accepting Schools	Initial Effective Date: 2021/11/22
Last Updated: 2026/03/20	Next Review Date: 2030/03/20

Purpose:

To ensure a whole-school approach to progressive discipline and promoting positive student behaviour from an anti-oppressive, anti-racist and inclusive lens that utilizes a continuum of interventions, supports, and consequences to address inappropriate student behaviour, and builds upon strategies that promote positive behaviours.

Guiding Principles:

- 1.0** The Grand Erie District School Board (Grand Erie) is committed to building and sustaining a positive school climate that is safe, inclusive and accepting for all students in order to support their education so that all students can reach their full potential. A comprehensive, whole-school approach involving all members of the school community, developed through a lens of anti-oppression, anti-racism and inclusion, fosters efforts to ensure that schools are safe and welcoming environments for everyone.
- 2.0** School climate is comprised of the learning environment and the relationships that exist within a school and within a school community.
- 3.0** A positive school climate exists when:
 - Everyone in the school community feels safe, included and accepted
 - Everyone actively promotes positive behaviours and interactions
 - Equity and inclusive education are embedded in the learning environment
 - There is a culture of mutual respect
- 4.0** **Characteristics of a positive school climate**
 - 4.1 In a positive school climate:
 - Students, employees and parents/caregivers feel – and are – safe, included and accepted
 - All members of the school community demonstrate respect, fairness and kindness in their interactions, and build healthy relationships that are free from discrimination and harassment
 - Students are encouraged and given support to be positive leaders and role models in their school community for example, by speaking up about issues such as bullying
 - Students, principals, employees, parents/caregivers and community members engage in open and ongoing dialogue and all partners are actively engaged
 - Principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded across the curriculum
 - Strategies for bullying prevention and intervention and awareness-raising are reinforced for students and staff/employees
 - The learning environment, instructional materials, and teaching and assessment strategies reflect the diversity of all learners

- Every student is inspired and given support to succeed in an environment of high expectations
- A positive school climate is a crucial component of preventing inappropriate behaviour

5.0 Promoting Positive Behaviour

- 5.1 In order to promote a positive school climate, Grand Erie supports the use of positive practices for prevention and positive behaviour management.
- 5.2 Appropriate action must consistently be taken to address behaviours that are contrary to the Grand Erie Code of Conduct and a school's Code of Conduct:
- Disciplinary strategies are guided by least punitive, most enabling consequences to support a student's academic learning and promote a safe and orderly learning and teaching environment
 - Each incident of inappropriate behaviour is unique in terms of situational variables
 - Disciplinary action in response to inappropriate behaviour will reflect consideration of mitigating factors, as required by the *Education Act* and its Regulations
 - The range of interventions, supports, and consequences used must be clear and developmentally appropriate, and must include learning opportunities for students in order to reinforce positive behaviours and help students make good choices
 - For students with special education needs, interventions, supports, and consequences must be consistent with the expectations in the student's Individual Education Plan
 - Parents/caregivers and community agencies are viewed as integral partners to be utilized when addressing student conduct
- 5.3 Positive practices for prevention include:
- equity and inclusive education strategy
 - bullying prevention programs
 - mentorship programs
 - student success strategies
 - character development initiatives
 - student leadership
 - promoting healthy student relationships
 - healthy lifestyles
 - professional learning opportunities for employees and students around bullying, violence, bias, stereotyping, cultural competency and sensitivity, discrimination, prejudice, hate, critical media literacy, appropriate and safe online behaviour
- 5.4 Positive behaviour management practices include:
- program modifications or accommodations
 - class placement
 - positive encouragement and reinforcement
 - individual, peer and group counselling
 - conflict resolution / dispute resolution
 - restorative practices
 - mentorship programs
 - promotion of healthy relationships
 - sensitivity programs
 - safety programs
 - safety plans
 - school, board and community support programs

6.0 Progressive Discipline

6.1 Progressive discipline is an approach that makes use of a continuum of prevention programs, interventions, supports and consequences, building upon strategies that build skills for healthy relationships and promote positive behaviours. When inappropriate behaviour occurs, disciplinary measures should be applied within a framework that shifts the focus from one that is solely punitive to one that is both corrective and supportive. Schools should utilize a range of interventions, supports and consequences that are developmentally, socially and emotionally appropriate and include learning opportunities for reinforcing positive behaviour while helping students to make better choices.

7.0 Background Considerations

7.1 The *Human Rights Code of Ontario* has primacy over provincial legislation and Grand Eriepolicies and procedures, such that the *Education Act*, regulations, Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memoranda, Board policies and procedures are subject to, and shall be interpreted and applied in accordance with, the *Human Rights Code of Ontario*.

7.2 Provincial legislation and Policy/Program Memoranda (concerning Code of Conduct, suspension/expulsion, bullying, including cyber-bullying and progressive discipline) – in conjunction with Grand Erie policies and procedures - create behavioural expectations for all persons on school property, and outline strategies to be taken to reduce incidents and impose appropriate consequences for students.

8.0 School Responsibility

8.1 Each school will develop, in consultation with school councils, a continuum of interventions, supports, and consequences to address inappropriate student behaviours, which include, but are not limited to, inappropriate sexual behaviour, 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 *Human Rights Code*.

9.0 Responding to Incidents

9.1 The purpose of responding to incidents of inappropriate behaviour is to stop and correct the behaviour immediately so the student involved will learn that it is not acceptable. Behaviour that is not addressed becomes accepted behaviour.

9.2 Employees who work directly with students including Administrators, teachers and non-teaching staff (including staff in social work, child and youth work, psychology, and related areas, and educational assistants) – must respond to any student behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate, whether on or off school property.

9.3 Responding might include asking a student to stop the inappropriate behaviour; naming the type of behaviour and why it is inappropriate and/or disrespectful; asking the student to correct the behaviour. When employees are aware that an incident involves a student with special educational needs, they are expected to respond in a way that is appropriate to that student.

9.4 Employees are not required to respond to incidents when, in their opinion, responding would cause immediate physical harm to themselves or another person. However, for incidents for which suspension or expulsion must be considered, employees must report these to the Principal and confirm their report electronically using the “Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part 1”. For incidents where suspension or expulsion would not be considered, and

employees feel it is not safe to respond, they will be expected to inform the Principal verbally as soon as possible. For example, an employee would not be required to respond if it would mean having to leave a student with special needs who would be in danger if left alone.

10.0 Progressive Student Discipline Model

- 10.1 Grand Erie endorses early and ongoing prevention and intervention to promote positive behaviour. Opportunity for students to learn from their choices is a critical element.
- 10.2 Grand Erie supports the use of consequences/interventions which may include:
- Oral reminders
 - Review of expectations
 - Contact with the student's parents/guardians
 - Peer mentoring
 - Written work assignment addressing the behaviour that has a learning component that requires reflection
 - Conflict mediation and resolution
 - Restorative approaches
 - Meeting with the student's parents/guardians, student and principal
 - Referral to counselling
 - Consultation with school supports
 - Referral to a community agency
 - Volunteer services in the community
 - detention
 - withdrawal of privileges
 - withdrawal from class
 - Restitution for damages
 - Depending on the severity of the infraction, suspensions and/or expulsions may be considered

11.0 School Considerations:

- 11.1 In considering the most appropriate response to address inappropriate behaviour, the following should be taken into consideration:
- The student's age and any mitigating factors
 - The nature and severity of the behaviour
 - The impact on the school climate (i.e., the relationships within the school community)
 - The Individual Education Plan (IEP) where applicable
 - Additional considerations may include culture, disability, race, etc.

12.0 Reporting to the Principal

- 12.1 The purpose of reporting incidents of inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour is to ensure that the Principal is aware of activities taking place in the school where suspension or expulsion must be considered, and to ensure a positive school climate.
- 12.2 Any Grand Erie employee who becomes aware that a student might have engaged in an activity for which suspension or expulsion must be considered will report the matter to the Principal as soon as reasonably possible. The employee must consider the safety of others and the urgency of the situation in reporting the incident, but, in any case, must report it to the Principal no later than the end of the school day.
- 12.3 In cases where immediate action is required, a verbal report to the Principal may be made. An electronic report, as outlined below, must be made when it is safe to do so.

- 12.4 Employees report incidents using the “Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part I”. Upon receipt of this form, Principals must provide the person who submitted the report with electronic acknowledgement on the “Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part II”. If no further action is taken by the Principal, the Principal is not required to retain the report and should destroy it. Regardless of the outcome of the investigation, the Principal must inform the person who submitted the incident report. (Note: The Safe Schools Incident Reporting forms can be located in the Staff Portal.)
- 12.5 If the Principal decides that action must be taken as a result of an incident of bullying, they will file a copy of the reporting form and documentation of the action taken in the Ontario Student Record (OSR). The names of all other students that appear on the form – both aggressors and victims - must be removed from the form before it is filed in the student’s OSR.
- 12.6 In the case of the victim, no information about the incident must be placed in their OSR, unless the victim or parents/caregivers of the victim expressly requests this.
- 12.7 Third-party service providers working with students will establish procedures for reporting inappropriate student behaviours to Principals.
- 12.8 Where the victim is also an aggressor, information about the incident and any action taken will be entered in the OSR if the Principal contacts the victim’s parents/caregivers. Contact with parents/caregivers should always be made as soon as possible.

13.0 Support for Students

- 13.1 All employees of Grand Erie must take seriously all allegations of bullying, including cyber-bullying, racism, gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment, inappropriate sexual behaviour and any other negative behaviour which would impact on the school climate. Schools are expected to support all students, including those who report such incidents, by providing them with contact information about professional supports, both Grand Erie based and community agencies.
- 13.2 Principals are required to notify parents/caregivers of the victim of serious student incidents unless the victim is 18 years old or over (or is 16 or 17 years of age and has withdrawn from parental control) or, in the opinion of the Principal, doing so would put the victim at risk of harm from a parent/caregiver. When Principals have decided not to notify parents/caregivers of victims, they must inform the employee who reported the incident. Principals shall also, if they determine it is appropriate to do so, inform other Employees of this decision. In addition, Principals must refer students to a community agency that can provide the appropriate type of confidential support when parents/caregivers are not called.
- 13.3 When it is determined that it is necessary to separate students to preserve school safety or to protect a student, it is preferable that the victim is not moved. The Grand Erie Safe and Accepting School Team will facilitate the move and transition of any students who it is determined need to change schools or school program as a result of a serious student incident.

14.0 Delegation of Authority

- 14.1 In the event that the school Principal is not present on school property, the Principal has the authority to delegate powers, duties and functions to the Vice-Principal, except assigning long-term suspensions or expulsions.
- 14.2 In the event that there is no Administrator present on school property, the Principal’s authority under Part XIII of the *Education Act* may be delegated to a teacher and must respect the terms of all applicable collective agreements. When this occurs, the Principal must communicate to employees when and to whom administrative responsibilities have been delegated. The Principal must

also ensure that the employee has access to Grand Erie policy, school emergency protocols and communication information for the Family of Schools Superintendent of Education.

- 14.3 Teachers may be delegated the authority to initially deal with situations that must be considered for suspension or expulsion. The most important consideration in these circumstances is the safety of those involved. The teacher must report all details of the initial investigation to the Principal as soon as possible.
- 14.4 The teacher must report to the Principal any activities that must be considered for suspension or expulsion that are received from staff or others during the Principal's absence. A teacher may not be delegated authority to suspend students.
- 14.5 A teacher may be delegated limited authority to contact the parents/caregivers of a student who has been harmed as the result of an activity for which suspension or expulsion must be considered. The information provided to the parents/caregivers 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.
- 14.6 The teacher must not be delegated the authority to discuss the nature of any discipline measures taken in response to the activity.
- 14.7 If the teacher is not sure whether parents/caregivers should be called, the teacher should contact the Principal or supervisory officer for direction. The Administrators will follow up with the parents/caregivers as soon as possible.

15.0 Circumstances in Which a Principal Must Consider Whether to Suspend a Student

- Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person
- Possessing alcohol, cannabis, (unless the student is authorized to use cannabis for medical purposes) drug paraphernalia, illegal or restricted drugs, or without a medical prescription (not included in ministry guidelines)
- Being under the influence of alcohol, illegal or restricted drugs, or cannabis, (unless the student is authorized to use cannabis for medical purposes) without a medical prescription (not included in ministry guidelines)..
- Swearing at, a teacher or at any person in a position of authority
- Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the student's school or on school premises
- Bullying, including cyberbullying
- Any other activities identified in school board policy

16.0 Circumstances in Which a Principal Must Suspend a Student Pending Expulsion

- Possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm
- Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person
- Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner
- Committing sexual assault
- Trafficking in weapons, illegal and/or restricted drugs
- Committing robbery
- Giving alcohol or cannabis to a minor
- Bullying, if the student has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying and the student's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person
- Engaging in any activity outlined in section 311 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 protected human right
- Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to the property of the board

- Engaging in activities on or off school property that cause the student's continuing presence in the school to create an unacceptable risk to the physical or mental well-being of another person in the school or board
- 16.1 In the event of a suspension for an activity, the Principal shall conduct an inquiry to determine whether to recommend the expulsion of the student, in accordance with the *Education Act*, its Regulations, and applicable Policy/Program Memoranda.

Reference(s):

- Bullying Prevention and Intervention Procedure (SO-010)
- Code of Conduct Policy (SO-12)
- Cyber-bullying Policy (SO-09)
- [*Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2*](#)
- Human Rights Code
- Provincial and Board Codes of Conduct (PPM 128)
- Programs for Long-term Suspension (PPM 141)
- Bullying Prevention and Intervention (PPM 144)
- Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour (PPM 145)