

Action Plan for Ontario School Principals

This document was developed by OESC in co-operation with the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Bill 157: Keeping Our Kids Safe at School (which becomes law on February 1, 2010), together with Regulation 472/07 and additions to PPM's 144 and 145, includes a number of new expectations for principals.

The following is a guide to assist principals in meeting the expectations of this new legislation package. It also takes into account the principles of the Ontario *Human Rights Code* ("Code").

Reporting Requirements

- ❖ Reporting requirements must be clearly communicated to staff
 - behaviours that require a written report to the principal
 - who must report
 - when report may be delayed
- ❖ Explain the nature of the written report
 - show sample and outline for staff how to complete the *Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part I* – see Appendix A
- ❖ Inform staff that principals must respond to Report in writing
- ❖ Explain the nature of the written response
 - Show sample of the *Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part II* – see Appendix B
- ❖ Principal to ensure that a report number is assigned to each report
- ❖ Principals to disclose information to parents of victims
 - what is disclosed
 - what is not disclosed
 - the exceptions to disclosure to parents

Responding Requirements

- ❖ Responding requirements must be clearly communicated to board employees, particularly those who work directly with students
 - behaviours that require response
 - who must respond
 - what response looks like
 - when not to respond

Delegation of Authority Regarding Student Discipline

- ❖ Clarify for staff Ministry guidelines and requirements – to be outlined according to board policy
- ❖
 - ***Vice-Principals***
 - ♦ Delegation may include all authority of the principal under Part XIII of the Education Act except the final decision regarding a recommendation to the board to expel a student and suspensions for more than 5 school days.
 - ***Teachers***
 - ♦ Teachers may be delegated the authority to initially deal with situations involving activities that occur that must be considered for suspension and/or expulsion.
 - ♦ A teacher may be delegated limited authority to contact the parent 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 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 clear on whether to call the parent or guardian the teacher should contact the principal or supervisory officer for direction. The principal or vice-principal will follow-up with the parent as soon as possible.

Supporting Students

- ❖ Explain PPM 144 requirements that school-level plans include:
 - awareness raising strategies;
 - support strategies including plans to protect victims.
- ❖ Outline procedures to support students who are victims of **serious student incidents*** and their parents
- ❖ Outline Safe Schools Resources to Support School Staff and Students
 - See Appendix C

Note: Serious student incidents are incidents that must be considered for suspension (s. 306.(1) or expulsion s. 310.(1)).*

Progressive Discipline

- ❖ All schools must develop and implement a school-wide progressive discipline plan.
- ❖ Homophobia, gender-based violence, sexual harassment and inappropriate sexual behaviour must be addressed.
- ❖ The progressive discipline plan should be clear that principals are expected to apply the *Code* in making disciplinary decisions. This would include considering disability-related

behaviour and racial harassment leading to a student's behaviours as mitigating factors, and taking into account the cumulative impact of suspensions on a student's access to education.

School Improvement Plans

- ❖ Schools to address gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment and inappropriate sexual behaviour in their school improvement plans

Monitoring and Review

- ❖ Schools to evaluate the effectiveness of their safe schools policies and programs through the use of anonymous school climate surveys which are to be undertaken a minimum of every two years.
- ❖ Schools required to share climate survey results with their Safe Schools Teams.
- ❖ The Ministry of Education's School Climate Surveys have been revised and can be used to fulfill this requirement. An online tool to help schools roll-up their survey results will be available shortly.
- ❖ Consider adding other questions that will help you identify human rights trends and perceptions of systemic discrimination or perceived barriers to equal access to education under the *Code*.

Prevention and Awareness

- ❖ Prevention and awareness raising strategies must be aimed at all members of the school community in areas including but not limited to:
 - homophobia,
 - gender-based violence,
 - sexual harassment,
 - other forms of discrimination under the *Code*,
 - inappropriate sexual behaviour,
 - critical media literacy, and
 - safe internet use

Appendix A

Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part I

Report No:	CONFIDENTIAL SAFE SCHOOLS INCIDENT REPORTING FORM – PART I
Name of School:	_____
1. Names of Pupil(s) Involved (if known)	_____ _____
2. Where the Incident Occurred (check one)	<input type="checkbox"/> A Location in the School or on School Property (please specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> At School-Related Activity (please specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> On a School Bus (Route #) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____
3. When the Incident Occurred	Date: _____ Time: _____
4. Type of Incident (check all applicable)	<p>Activities for which suspension must be considered under section 306(1) of the Education Act</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person. <input type="checkbox"/> Possessing alcohol or illegal drugs. <input type="checkbox"/> Being under the influence of alcohol. <input type="checkbox"/> Swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority. <input type="checkbox"/> Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the pupil’s school or to property located on the premises of the pupil’s school. <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying. <input type="checkbox"/> Any other activity for which a pupil may be suspended under a policy of the board. [Note: Boards must specify on this form any other activities for which the principal may suspend according to board policy.]
	<p>Activities for which expulsion must be considered under section 310(1) of the Education Act</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm. <input type="checkbox"/> Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person. <input type="checkbox"/> Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner. <input type="checkbox"/> Committing sexual assault. <input type="checkbox"/> Trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs. <input type="checkbox"/> Committing robbery. <input type="checkbox"/> Giving alcohol to a minor. <input type="checkbox"/> Any other activity for which a pupil may be expelled under a policy of a board. [Note: Boards must specify on this form any other activities for which the board may expel according to board policy.]
5. Report Submitted By:	Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____
Contact Information:	Location: _____ Telephone: _____

Appendix B

Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part II

SAFE SCHOOLS INCIDENT REPORTING FORM – PART II	
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT	
Report No:	
Report Submitted By: Name: _____ Date: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Action Taken	<input type="checkbox"/> No Action Required
(Principal): Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____	
<i>Note: Only Part II to be returned to the person who reported.</i>	

Safe Schools Resources to Support School Staff and Students

- ***Registry of Resources for Safe and Inclusive Schools:***
 - ♦ Provides information about resources which may be suitable for purchase and use in elementary and secondary schools including resources to help prevent bullying/harassment and to promote safe and inclusive schools.
 - ♦ URL <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/bullyprevention/registry.html>

- ***Sample School Climate Surveys:***
 - ♦ The ministry's sample school climate surveys have been expanded to include questions on equity and inclusive education and issues such as gender-based bullying, sexual harassment and homophobia. An online tool is now available for schools to aid in the roll-up of their results.
 - ♦ URL www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/bullying.html

- ***Ontario Human Rights Commission ("OHRC"):***
 - ♦ The *Code* applies to disciplinary decisions and policies under the *Education Act*, and has primacy over the *Education Act*.
 - ♦ The OHRC has information to help schools and school boards prevent and address discrimination on its website at www.ohrc.on.ca
 - ♦ In particular, see the "Safe Schools Settlements" at <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/resources/news/backgroundedsettlement/view>, and the *Guidelines on Accessible Education* (2004) and the *Policy and Guidelines on Race and Racial Discrimination* (2005).

- ***Kids Help Phone***
 - ♦ In 2005, the Ministry entered into a 3-year partnership with Kids Help Phone (KHP) to help over 40,000 Ontario kids with "bullying-related" issues by phone and through their online counselling, information and referral services. As a result of this success the partnership has been renewed for an additional 3 years until 2011. Kids Help Phone's telephone counselling is confidential, free, open 24/7 and available throughout Canada.
 - ♦ URL www.kidshelpphone.ca (also provides links to other resources and supports for youth)

- ***EGALE Resources***
 - ♦ EGALE Canada is developing a web-based forum for students and educators to facilitate discussion, networking, and support those involved in creating and running Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs). Additionally, EGALE is creating a web-based, Ontario specific directory of GSAs. Web-based resources and information to facilitate the creation of and sustainability of GSAs will also be available (<http://www.egale.ca/>)

- ***Ontario's Expanded Telepsychiatry Services***

- ♦ Ontario's telepsychiatry program is a creative solution for increasing access and reducing wait times for children and youth in rural, remote and underserved communities. It uses videoconferencing to provide children, youth and their families or caregivers with access to clinical consultations with a child psychiatrist without having to leave their local communities. (<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/>)
- ***A Resource Guide and Online Training Tool for Ontario Schools***
 - ♦ In this forthcoming ministry resource guide, information will be provided for schools on supporting students when responding to issues involving student-to-student sexual relationships, including dating violence and sexual assault.