Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan

Promoting Healthy Relationships within Positive School Climates

SCHOOL NAME: Maxwell Heights Secondary School

OUR SCHOOL COMMITMENT

We are committed to establishing and supporting learning and working environments that are safe, welcoming, respectful, equitable, accessible, inclusive and free from discrimination, oppression and harm. Indigenous inherent rights, human rights and equity are at the center of our work. This fundamental commitment to human rights begins with meaningful investment in a Positive School Climate.

A Positive School Climate:

- Ensures that everyone is treated with dignity and respect;
- Accepts, welcomes and includes everyone;
- Values, affirms and supports the expression of diverse identities;
- Promotes, protects and upholds Indigenous inherent rights and human rights – including students' right to education without discrimination and employees' right to employment without discrimination;
- Centres the rights of the child/student in ways that are not discriminatory and that do not cause or perpetuate harm;
- Prioritizes relationships, well-being and equity through a Whole School Approach.

While we work proactively to promote positive and respectful interactions, we will also address any behaviour or interaction that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate, including bullying, discrimination and other forms of harmful interaction. In planning our responses, we will consider and provide support for all impacted staff and students, including those who were harmed, those who witnessed the harm, and those who caused harm.

We will promote a Positive School Climate in both proactive and responsive ways

MINISTRY STATEMENTS

*"*A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included, and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions. Principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in the learning environment to support a positive school climate and a culture of mutual respect. A positive school climate is a crucial component of bullying prevention."

Taken from Ministry of Education of Ontario, PPM 145

"Bullying will not be accepted on school property, at school-related activities, on school buses, or in any other circumstances (e.g., online) where engaging in bullying will have a negative impact on the school climate."

Taken from Ministry of Education of Ontario, PPM 14

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Healthy Relationships are grounded in treating one another with dignity and respect.

Healthy Relationships provide:

- A sense of security and stability
- Basic needs
- A sense of being valued and belonging
- Support and guidance to learn essential skills and understanding
- Protection from excessive stress

All adults who are responsible for children play an important role in teaching them about healthy relationships and bullying. Teachers, caregivers, and other adults involved in children's lives:

- Model relationship skills and attitudes
- Create positive situations in which children and youth interact.

Children will only learn positive relationship skills and attitudes if they observe and interact with adults who model positive relationships when interacting with children and adults.

PREVNet

HARMFUL INTERACTIONS

Bullying: Aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a pupil where…

(a) the behaviour is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behaviour would be likely to have the effect of,
    i. causing harm, fear or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social or academic harm, harm to the individual's reputation or harm to the individual's property, or
    ii. creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, and

(b) the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the pupil and the individual based on factors such as ancestry, size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power (e.g., popularity), economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, disability or the receipt of special education

For the purposes of the definition of "bullying", behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

Aggression: A response to conflict, threat or an internal emotional state of anger/irritability in which the intent to harm may or may not be present. Aggression…

(a) can take direct or indirect forms, including physical, verbal, social and electronic
(b) can become bullying when a power imbalance in a relationship develops over time because repeated acts of aggression may intimidate the person on the receiving end

Teasing: A type of "playful" interaction that can range from positive (e.g., bantering, joshing, ribbing) to negative (e.g., mocking, pestering, tormenting)

(a) Positive teasing takes place within a healthy relationship. It is good natured, fun and reciprocal
(b) Negative teasing is characterized by words or actions that cause harm on one or both sides of the interaction. Negative teasing harms relationships as well as the school climate

Slurs and personal insults: The use of discriminatory, targeted or hateful language that is focused on Human Rights Code grounds, a person's identity or personal characteristics is never acceptable, whether this language is used in the context of bullying, conflict, teasing or aggression. These include:

(a) Slurs and phrases that dehumanize, mock, ostracize, discriminate against or victimize others based on race, Indigenous identity, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religion, ethnicity, neurodivergent traits, ability, financial status, family status, etc.
(b) Personal insults that target traits like body type and other physical characteristics, "intelligence," personality traits or personal interests

Conflict: A normal type of interaction that everyone should learn to navigate and resolve effectively. Conflict may be distinguished from other harmful interactions in that…

(a) there is no power imbalance between those in conflict, or at least, the power imbalance is not being weaponized by the person with more power
(b) all parties are typically invested in resolving the conflict (or at least ending it)
(c) conflict most often occurs among people who share an existing relationship: classmates, siblings, friends, partners, colleagues, etc.
(d) tensions underlying the conflict are not related to identity (e.g., ancestry, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion) and may be amplified by stressors for one or both parties in conflict
(e) conflict typically centers on disagreement, personal errors, unclear or unmet expectations, or poor communication

Cyber-bullying: For the purposes of the definition of "bullying" seen here, bullying includes bullying by electronic means (commonly known as cyber-bullying), including,

(a) creating a web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
(b) impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet; and
(c) communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.

Our Positive School Climates Team (Previously known as "Safe and Accepting School Team")

Our Positive School Climate Team leads our planning to promote a safe, inclusive, and welcoming school climate.

Chair: **Arlene Wood, Marni Breceda, Sherri Tsigaris**

Teacher(s): **Ryan Johnston, Michael Askew**

Anti-Oppression Lead(s): **Karen Jebson**

Well-Being Lead(s): **Sherri Tsigaris**

Student(s): **Positive School Climate Committee (Grade 9 – 12)**

Community Partner(s): **Matthew Way, RN**

Principal: **Saamah Jadoon & Kyle Deegan**

Support Staff: **Jessica Bisschop**

Parent(s)/caregiver(s): **Brent Birchard**

Strengths and Goals

What the Data Tells Us – School Climate and Well-being Surveys and Other Data

As part of the on-going monitoring and evaluation process, schools gather data from various sources, including school climate surveys of students, staff and parents/caregivers every two years. Our school data indicates the following:

Strengths:

Maxwell Staff, students and family community take pride in the community and safety of all students. Mutual respect is strong, with staff believing in student ability and supporting their goals through a variety of means. Recent data also shows a decrease in reported bullying.

Based on the analysis of various sources of data, our school has identified specific bullying prevention and intervention goal statements for this school year. These goal statements will drive our actions for this year. Outcomes will be monitored and assessed using a continuous improvement cycle.

Goals:

Maxwell would like to make our caregivers and students feel even more supported with an increased sense of belonging by giving light to students' voices where appropriate as well as continue our efforts to involve our parental community in our initiatives and events. The continuation of extracurricular activities as well as continuing to acknowledge all culturally significant events within our school community will further strengthen student sense of belonging here at Maxwell Heights. We are committed to outlining and acknowledging positive character traits within our school community on a monthly basis to encourage positive interactions between staff, students and peers.

Proactive Approaches

What We are Doing in Our Classrooms and in Our School - Strategies that Promote a Positive School Climate

Our school is implementing a variety of strategies to support student well-being, affirm and promote diverse identities, and create a welcoming environment. These strategies involve students, staff, caregivers, and community members as part of a whole school approach. Below are highlights of our strategies:

- Building resiliency through affirming identities
- Grade 9 Day
- Welcome back/Code of Conduct Assemblies
- Weekly Student Schedule (Instagram & Grade Level Google Classrooms)
- Bullying awareness and prevention week
- Safe Schools Bullying Awareness and Prevention Conference
- Cyber Safety
- Digital Citizenship
- Caring adults
- Regular class visits by administration
- Inclusion of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit perspectives
- Public Health Nurse
- Professional development – Guest speakers
- Positive mental health displays and bulletin boards
- Classroom practices that encourage healthy relationships and a positive sense of self
- Progressive Discipline: A Bias-Free Approach
- Healthy Conflict Resolution and Restorative Practices
- Character Education (e.g. empathy, respect)
- Targeted lessons on Digital Character Education (integrated in ENG4C classes)
- Targeted lessons on Digital Citizenship (integrated in TAS1O1 classes)
- Community outreach activities
- School-based community events
- Parent nights
- Parent Presentations on Human Trafficking
- School Community Council
- Culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy
- Equity and Inclusive Education
- Yearly food drives
- Pink shirt day and orange shirt day
- Modelling Upstander/Ally behaviour
- Encouraging Self-regulation
- Modelling problem solving and decision-making skills
- Student Council
- Sporting Events
- Girls Night In – Female Empowerment Initiative
- Weekly Family Communication to foster transparency, inclusivity and school-wide awareness
- Collaborating and consulting with community partners, affinity groups and DDSB departments as appropriate (eg DBEN, DENSA, DEANE, DTEN, HAND, KIEN, LHEAD, MEND, NINE, SAND, SD Anti-Oppression, ISS, Indigenous Education, Positive School Climate)

How Student Voice is Present in Our School

Engaging students to help shape the learning environment is an important component of a whole school approach in promoting a positive school climate – a climate in which *each and every* student feels that they matter. The following examples are highlights of student voice in action at our school:

- I wish my Administrator knew – Student Voice Initiative
- Student Affinity Networks (Muslim Student Association, Maxwell Heights Black Student Network, Hindu Association, Christian Student Association, DESI Club, Equity Club, Gender and Sexuality Alliance)
- Positive School Climate Committee
- Student Council
- Leadership Camp
- School Dances
- Terry Fox Run/Walk
- Announcements (student lead)
- Social Justice clubs
- Pokemon Club
- Anime Club
- K-Pop Club
- After School Weight Room
- Chess Club
- DECA
- HOSA (group for students interested in going into health sciences program)
- Inclusive announcements (If you are able, please stand . . .)
- Computer Science
- Robotics
- Games Club (D and D, video games, gaming club)
- Maxwell Grounds Crew
- Maxwell Miracles – Food and Toy Drive
- MDC (Maxwell Dance Company)
- Model United Nations
- Open Studio after school art program
- Student-Led Training Opportunities
- Waterloo Math Contests
- White Pine Book Club
- Girls Night In Committee
- Grad Gala committee

How we create the conditions whereby students feel safe to report bullying and other harmful interactions at our school.

Creating the conditions within which students may feel safe to report begins with investment in relationships and the promotion of a Positive School Climate. Additionally, procedures may be put in place that facilitate students and parent/caregiver reporting as well as procedures that outline the requirements for staff to report such instances in accordance with legislation.

Student Reporting:

- Reporting bullying or other harmful interactions to a trusted adult (e.g., parent/caregiver, teacher, administrator, support staff, police liaison officer).
- Using the "Report Bullying Now" button on the school/board website provides students a more discreet means of reporting bullying behaviours.

Staff Reporting:

- "The Education Act states that an employee of the board who becomes aware that a student at the school of the board may have engaged in a serious student incident shall report the matter to the principal as soon as reasonably possible" (PPM 144)
- When appropriate, staff complete and submit the "Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part I" to the principal. The principal provides written acknowledgement to the employee using the "Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part II" (PPM 144)

Parent/Community Reporting:

- Reporting bullying and other harmful interactions to the classroom teacher, support staff and/or administration
- Using the **"Tell Us" button** on the school website
- **Tell Us!** is a confidential reporting tool that is used to report incidents/concerns or positive feedback. This reporting tool is for non-emergency reporting. It is monitored Monday to Friday, during regular business hours. This tool can be used to report incidents such as:
    - Incidents of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or hate;
    - Drugs, vandalism, violence, or any other inappropriate behaviour;
    - Positive behaviours, such as students demonstrating empathy, allyship, fairness, honesty or initiative.

Strategies that help students to feel safe to report

- Relationship-building strategies
- Reporting mechanisms
- Awareness-building)

How We Are Building Capacity for Promoting Healthy Relationships as Part of a Positive School Climate at Our School.

Training/learning opportunities occur at the board level, community level and school level. Here are highlights of our training/learning opportunities:

Students:

- Grade 9 Day
- Welcome back/Code of Conduct assembly
- Police Liaison/Accident Awareness presentations
- Durham Youth Drug Awareness Committee (DYDAC) Student Leadership Conference
- Cyber Safety
- Digital Citizenship
- Public health nurse presentation
- Psychological and social worker services presentations
- Specialist High Skills Major programming
- Vetted evidence-based/evidence-informed training that reinforces curriculum connections
- Workplace safety awareness training
- Discussing mental health
- Student led advocacy and support groups (Orange/Pink Shirt Days)
- Ally week
- Cultural celebrations
- School Climate Survey

Staff:

- Introduction to Restorative Practice Framework and Circle training
- Culturally Responsive Pedagogy training
- Anti-Oppression Practice and Pedagogy training
- Positive School Climate training
- DDSB Safety/Ally Week Open House
- Reacting and Teaching Students in Poverty-Strategies for Erasing the Opportunity Gap training
- Mental Health First Aid for Adults Who Interact with Youth training
- Violence Threat Assessment Protocol training
- Safe Schools Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week and Pink Shirt Day staff meeting PowerPoints
- EL: Foundations of a Mentally Healthy Classroom training
- Learning networks
- Equity representatives training
- Trauma informed training
- New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) training
- Anti-oppression leads

Parents/caregivers

- Parents Reaching Out Initiatives

- Parents as Partners Conference: “Balancing Tech Wealth with Mental Health”
- Public Health presentations
- School Community Council guest speakers
- Parent engagement presentations / activities
- DDSB Safety/Ally Week Open House
- Parents’ survey

Responsive Approaches

How We Respond to Bullying and other harmful interactions at Our School

Our school response follows a bias-aware approach to progressive discipline that involves the following immediate and long-term actions:

- Ensuring the safety of all involved
- Responding to any student behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate
- Conducting a school-based investigation (consulting the Police/Board Protocol, when necessary and appropriate) considering mitigating, human rights and other factors
- Contacting the parents/caregivers of the person(s) who has been harmed and the parents/caregivers of the person(s) who has caused harm, in accordance with legislation
- Considering the broader context and implications of the harmful interaction (e.g., racism, homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, Islamophobia, antisemitism, faithism, classism, ableism, misogyny) in order to inform both immediate and long-term responses
- Developing an action plan that is responsive and supportive
- Taking concrete steps to repair relationship and restore a Positive School Climate
- Considering individual, class, and/or whole-school learning opportunities to foster the conditions wherein similar situations may be prevented in the future, e.g., providing a school-wide lesson or activity on anti-racism
- Consulting and collaborating with community partners, affinity groups and DDSB departments, as appropriate (e.g., DBEN, DENSA, KIEN, MEND, Equity, ISS, Indigenous Education, Positive School Climates)
- Implementing a Positive School Climates Student Safety Plan, when necessary
- Implementing/reviewing a Special Education Behaviour Safety Plan, when appropriate

How We Provide Ongoing Support to Those Impacted by Bullying at Our School

Support for the person(s) who has been harmed, the person(s) who has caused harm and the person(s) who has witnessed harm may include:

- Furthering school-level support such as connection to a caring adult, classroom and yard considerations, special needs considerations, participation in co-curricular programming
- Implementing board-level supports such as social work or psychological services (with consent)
- Identifying community support resources
- Implementing a Student Safety Plan when necessary

Follow-up for the person(s) who has been harmed, the person(s) who has caused harm and the person(s) who has witnessed harm will include:

- Individual monitoring based on specific needs (e.g., regular check-ins)
- Conversations or learning opportunities as needed to support self-awareness, understanding of impact, social-emotional learning skills, and/or to inspire a shift in ideological trajectory if needed, e.g., in cases where ignorance, hate or discrimination are at play

Communication

How We are Communicating with Students, Staff, Parents/Caregivers and the Community

To support a whole school approach, the school will communicate with staff, students, parents/caregivers and the community. Communication methods include:

Students:

- Discussions and conversations
- Announcements
- Classroom visits
- Assemblies
- School/Board websites
- Weekly Schedule
- Social media (Instagram)
- Grade level google classrooms
- Posters
- Student Council

Staff:

- Discussions and conversations
- Staff meetings
- Curriculum Lead meetings
- Professional development days
- Weekly Staff Memo and Staff Google Classroom
- E-mails
- Social media
- Committees
- Professional learning networks
- School/Board websites

Caregivers:

- Weekly Family Communication Email
- SCC (School Community Council)
- Discussions and conversations
- School/Board websites
- Parent engagement activities (e.g., Open house, assemblies, concerts, information nights)
- Social media (Instagram)
- Committees
- Synervoice (phone call home system)

Continuous Improvement

As part of the continuous improvement model, the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be monitored regularly through:

- Positive School Climate Team meetings
- Staff meetings, curriculum team meetings, committee meetings
- School Learning planning

Please visit Durham District School Board website for more information on how the Durham District School Board is supporting student well-being and promoting a positive school climate.