



LIVING SKY SCHOOL DIVISION No. 202
Growth Without Limits, Learning For All

STUDENT HARASSMENT PROTOCOL

Solution-Focused approach

Positive psychology

Positive Education

The Strengths Perspective

resilience

Proactive schools

Positive Behaviour Support

March 2014

STUDENT HARASSMENT PROTOCOL

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES	1
1.2 STATEMENT OF BELIEF	2
SECTION 2 – DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT	3
2.1 HARASSMENT AND BULLYING BEHAVIOUR	3
2.2 TYPES OF HARASSMENT	3
2.3 CYBER BULLYING	4
2.4 CRITERIA TO DETERMINE THE SERIOUSNESS OF OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR	4
2.5 BULLYING AND HARASSMENT BEHAVIOURS CONTINUUM CHART	5
SECTION 3 – PROCEDURES AND SUGGESTED PRACTICE	6
3.1 STUDENTS	6
3.1.1 WHAT THE TARGET OF HARASSMENT CAN DO	7
3.1.2 RESPONSIBILITY OF STUDENT OBSERVING HARASSMENT	7
3.1.3 ACTIONS OF STUDENTS WHO ARE ACCUSED OF HARASSMENT	
3.2 PROFESSIONAL/SUPPORT STAFF MEMBER	8
3.2.1 ACTIONS OF SUPPORTING ADULT	8
3.2.2 THE INFORMAL RESOLUTION PROCESS	9
3.2.3 THE FORMAL RESOLUTION PROCESS	11
3.2.3.1 INVESTIGATION	11
3.2.3.2 ACTION PLAN	11
3.3 PARENTS/CAREGIVERS	12
3.3.1 HOW CAN PARENTS DEAL WITH HARASSMENT	12
3.4 WHAT ALL LSSD STUDENTS OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT HARASSMENT	13
APPENDIX A – DEFINITIONS	14
APPENDIX B – FLOWCHART	15
APPENDIX C – HARASSMENT COMPLAINT FORM	16
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	17

1| INTRODUCTION

This protocol is developed in a manner consistent with the goals, values, and mission statement of the Living Sky School Division (LSSD) Board of Education. It is the goal of the Board of Education to provide a safe and respectful learning environment. “Growth Without Limits, Learning For All” requires that students feel physically and emotionally safe. However, when harassment occurs students should have the tools and support to recognize it and respond appropriately.

This protocol is meant to provide students and employees with a process by which they can successfully address harassment or bullying behaviours. Whether the informal process or the formal process is implemented in response to harassment or bullying the protocol upholds the LSSD belief in a safe, caring, and supportive environment for all.

1.1 GUIDING PRINCIPALS

The Board considers itself responsible for doing everything within reason to protect students’ and employees’ human rights and dignity. Thus, harassment of any member of the education community is intolerable and may warrant investigation and possible disciplinary action. This protocol complements the LSSD Discipline Policy.

THE BOARD’S RESPONSIBILITY

The Board recognizes its responsibility to provide students and employees with education about harassment. The Board encourages programming to prevent harassment and bullying. With such programming, students will be able to recognize and identify these behaviours in themselves and others and can learn what can be done if they believe they or someone else is a target of harassment.

A CORRECTIVE TEACHING MODEL

The Board promotes the development and training of in-school personnel in handling situations of harassment. Incidents of harassment and bullying behaviour initially are responded to in the least intrusive manner. Employees are encouraged to follow the procedures and suggested practice as outlined in this protocol. Those who engage in harassment or bullying behaviour shall be dealt with in a corrective rather than a punitive manner. However, the Board expects supervisors to respond appropriately and **if the situation is not resolved the aggressor may be subject to reprimand, suspension, dismissal (of employee), or expulsion (of student).**

1.2 STATEMENT OF BELIEF

Based on the Harassment Procedure, the Board of Education of the Living Sky School Division believes:

- Harassment is a school and community issue. Harassment impairs the right of students to learn and interact in a safe, affirming environment.
- Harassment may include comments or behaviour by any individual towards another which is perceived to be intimidating or hurtful. This includes harassment on the basis of race, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, ability, physical size or weight, nationality, age, ancestry, place of origin, or receipt of public assistance.
- Education, intervention, and policy are effective in preventing and dealing with harassment.
- School personnel have a duty to take harassment seriously and deal with it effectively. Harassment must be met with an appropriate response.
- Harassment is unacceptable conduct; likewise a false accusation of harassment is unacceptable conduct.

THE STUDENTS'
RIGHT TO BE
SAFE

2| DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT

Harassment is any unwanted comment or behaviour by an individual or group which is or is perceived to control, hurt, intimidate or alienate another person or group. Harassment may include unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendoes or taunting about a person's body, attire, gender, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic background, place of birth, citizenship, ancestry, age, physical size or weight, religion, marital status, family status or ability. Harassment is against the law.

2.1 HARASSMENT AND BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

SINGLE INCIDENT

Unwanted behaviour perceived to be hurtful or intimidating is considered harassment, regardless of how often it occurs. Harassment can consist of a single incident. It is common, however, for harassment to involve a series of unwanted, often subtle, incidents over time.

BULLYING TO REPEATED HARASSMENT

Bullying is repeated harassment. It is unwanted physical, verbal, psychological, or sexual treatment which is repeated over time. Bullying often means that there is an imbalance of power. Power may be on the basis of age, physical size, status or position, or ability. This imbalance of power makes it difficult for the target to defend himself or herself. Bullying can occur from one individual toward another, from a group of people toward one individual or from one group of people toward another group of people.

2.2 TYPES OF HARASSMENT

PHYSICAL

Physical: Harassment can be physical in nature involving contact in some way with the physical person of the target. Examples include hitting, grabbing, pushing, using a weapon, etc.

VERBAL

Verbal: Harassment can be verbal in nature involving using words in some way to hurt or intimidate another person. Examples include name-calling, demeaning language, racial slurs, rumors, etc.

SOCIAL

Social: Harassment may not necessarily involve direct physical or verbal contact. Examples include purposeful exclusion, refusal to work with a person, inciting a group to reject someone, etc.

SEXUAL

Sexual: Harassment can be sexual in nature involving unwanted sexual activity or attention. It may involve remarks, gestures or actions of a sexual nature that result in a person feeling unsafe or uncomfortable. Examples include unwelcome physical contact, rude jokes or sexually suggestive remarks, threats or bragging about sexual prowess, requests for sexual favours, etc. It may also involve displaying pornographic or offensive material.

2.3 CYBER BULLYING

CYBER BULLYING

Cyber bullying or online bullying involves the use of electronic devices and communication technologies such as: email, instant messaging, text messages, mobile phones, websites and social media sites (e.g. blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. Cyber bullying can be as simple as continuing to send email to someone who has said they want no further contact with the sender. Cyber bullying may also include threats, sexual messages, spreading embarrassing and demeaning photos, or pejorative labels (i.e. hate speech). Cyber bullies may publish personal contact information for their victims online via social media and other websites. They may attempt to assume the identity of a victim for the purpose of publishing material in their name that defames or ridicules them. Cyber bullying may be more harmful due to the immediacy with which communication technologies can spread malicious, embarrassing and hateful messages via invisible and anonymous collaborators to a widespread, unknown audience.

2.4 CRITERIA TO DETERMINE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR

INTENTIONALITY

The target's feelings are important in assessing the situation. Harassment is likely if the complainant feels hurt, humiliated, or intimidated, and also believes that the respondent intended to hurt them with the unwanted treatment. The negative emotions experienced can range from mild to extreme. It needs to be understood that all harassment and bullying is serious in terms of the detrimental potential for the target.

The complainant's response to the unwanted behaviour can offer information about the situation. If the complainant has told the respondent how they feel and asked them to stop and the unwanted comments or behaviours have continued, this would increase the seriousness of the situation.

BALANCE OF POWER

Situations of alleged harassment are more serious if there is an imbalance of power between the complainant and the respondent. This imbalance of power makes it more difficult for the complainant to deal with the situation.

2.5 HARASSING BEHAVIOUR CONTINUUM CHART

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
PHYSICAL		
• rough play • pushing and shoving	• punching, kicking • spitting • clear intentions to hurt	• inflicting bodily harm • use of a weapon
VERBAL		
• teasing • name-calling	• intimidation • racial slurs • swearing	• threats of harm • threatening use of weapon – danger to life
SOCIAL		
• dirty looks • gossiping • ignoring • subtle gestures with intent	• spreading rumours • exclusion from a group • social rejection • intolerance	• severe alienation • public humiliation • group harassment • public-wide distribution via email
SEXUAL		
• jokes with a sexual theme • innuendo	• comments on physical character-issues • sexual gestures	• sexual touching • threats of sexual acts • forcing sexual acts • pornography

Note:

- Severity increases with repetition – i.e. repeated name-calling or shoving becomes more damaging
- Degrees of intention are often difficult to determine
- There are different modes of bullying and harassment that span the levels of severity i.e. teasing, social rejection, or threats of sexual acts can occur via facial expression or cyber modes.
- Age and developmental level are considered in assessing severity – i.e. spitting by a kindergarten student may be level 1, whereas spitting by a grade 8 student may be level 3.
- The lines between the levels are blurred.

3| PROCEDURES AND SUGGESTED PRACTICE

3.1 STUDENTS

3.1.1 WHAT THE TARGET OF HARASSMENT CAN DO

Level 1 or 2:

IGNORE

IGNORE

Step One: If a person believes they are the target of harassment and the harassment is of a mild form the first and least intrusive response is for them to ignore the behaviour. Ignoring may result in the harassing behaviour stopping. Ignoring is a short-term strategy only and the student should move to step two if the bullying does not stop shortly.

SAY “STOP”

SAY “STOP”

Step Two: The second response, if it is safe and comfortable to do so, is for the target of harassment to tell the person how he or she feels and request that the behaviour stop. This person-to-person communication may yield a positive result. This becomes an “I feel” statement or an “I” message.

REPORT TO ADULT

REPORT TO ADULT

Step Three: If it is not safe or is ineffective to ignore or to talk directly with the aggressor, the target needs to speak with an adult in the school with whom they feel comfortable in order to receive support.

Level 3 and possibly 2:

REPORT TO ADULT

REPORT TO ADULT

Step One: If the harassment is of a more severe form, the target needs to speak with an adult in the school with whom they feel comfortable. The adult should report this to the in-school administrator who is compelled to intervene by supporting the student through approaches such as speaking with the person doing the harassment, mediating a meeting between the two, contacting parents, or speaking with other staff members. If the above practices do not result in a satisfactory end to the harassment a formal complaint can be made by the complainant with the support of school personnel.

3.1.2 RESPONSIBILITY OF STUDENTS OBSERVING HARASSMENT

It is considered to be everyone's duty to respond to harassment.

When students observe harassment they are encouraged to offer assistance to the target. This may be done in the following ways in any order:

- a) asking the target if he/she wants help
- b) telling the aggressor to stop if safe to do so
- c) reporting the incident to an appropriate adult

If the target agrees to receiving assistance the student follows through with the help. If the harassment continues the student informs the target that it will be reported to an adult in the school. This adult will follow the guidelines in (3.2.1 Actions of the Supporting Adult) and will refer to an in-school administrator.

3.1.3 ACTIONS OF STUDENTS (AGGRESSORS) WHO ARE ACCUSED OF HARASSMENT

EMPATHY

EMPATHY

The student accused of harassment is encouraged to reflect on their behaviour. They must recognize that even if the behaviour is not intended to offend someone, it may indeed be offensive to another person. Nonetheless, the target's point of view of the behaviour is critical in determining the appropriateness of the behavior.

STOP

STOP

The aggressor must stop the offending behaviour when asked to do so.

APOLOGIZE/ASK FOR SUPPORT

APOLOGIZE/ ASK FOR SUPPORT

The aggressor is encouraged to apologize to the target and include a commitment to not let the behaviour happen again. The aggressor may choose to ask for support from an adult within the school. In most cases the in-school administrator is present for the apology. It is likely that the aggressor will be asked to meet with the school counsellor.

3.2 PROFESSIONAL/SUPPORT STAFF MEMBER

3.2.1 ACTIONS OF THE SUPPORTING ADULT

FOLLOW THROUGH

After determining the seriousness of the situation the adult will decide whether they are comfortable following through with supporting the student or whether they will refer to an in-school administrator in the school. The adult may consult with another teacher, an administrator, the school counsellor or an educational assistant or teacher assistant with the approval of the principal. **The adult who will follow through with supporting the student must be an in-school administrator and/or teacher and becomes the supporting adult.**

INFORMAL OR FORMAL

A decision regarding following an informal process or a formal process needs to be made by the target and the supporting adult together. **The supporting adult must be a member of the professional staff.**

Level 1 or 2 – Report to teacher or administrator

Level 3 or 2

Note: See Informal or Formal Process



3.2.2 THE INFORMAL RESOLUTION PROCESS

The informal process is used for situations considered to be at Level 1 or possibly Level 2. (See 2.5 Harassing Behaviours Chart) The supporting adult (professional staff) will ask for more details surrounding the incident(s).

CLARIFYING QUESTIONS

Examples of questions include:

CLARIFYING QUESTIONS

- What happened?
- Where did it happen?
- When did it happen?
- Who did the harassing behaviour?
- How did you feel?
- How often has this occurred?
- Who else saw or heard what happened?
- What did you do in response?
- What was the result of your actions?

ADULT SUPPORTS THE TARGET

ADULT SUPPORTS THE TARGET

If the target has not previously done so and feels able to talk directly to the aggressor the **professional staff** may support them in this or may refer to the in-school administrator. (See 3.1.1 What the Target of Harassment Can Do).

If the target either has followed the steps in 3.1.1 or is not comfortable doing so the **professional staff** may speak with the aggressor on behalf of the target or will refer to an in-school administrator to guide a mediation process with the target and the aggressor.

Engaging in a mediation process is the preferred approach of the above two since the face-to-face meeting of students is often more effective in ending the harassment and building positive relationships.

STEPS: REACH UNDERSTANDING EXPLORE NEEDS FORM SOLUTION

STEPS: REACH UNDERSTANDING, EXPLORE NEEDS, FORM SOLUTION

The mediation process involves the following:

- Meeting with the persons or parties involved in the harassment or bullying incident(s)

- Having both parties understand what happened from the other's perspective
- Having both parties explain their feelings and intentions regarding the incident(s)
- Explore the needs of both parties
- Identify possible solutions which would satisfy both parties
- Having both parties agree on which solutions will be implemented

PARENTS CONTACTED

PARENTS CONTACTED

The parents of the students involved will be informed of the incident and that the informal resolution process was used. **The aggressor is informed that should harassment continue, a formal process would be initiated.**



3.2.3 THE FORMAL RESOLUTION PROCESS

COMPLAINANT AND RESPONDENT

The formal resolution process is used when the alleged complaint falls within Levels 2 and 3 (See 2.5 Harassing Behaviours Chart), when there is no agreement reached during the informal process, or when the aggressor continues to offend. At this time, the students involved will be referred to as the complainant and the respondent.

3.2.3.1 INVESTIGATION

SUPPORTING ADULT REFERS TO IN-SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

The formal process begins with the supporting adult completing the 'Harassment Complaint Form' (Appendix C). The supporting adult must refer to the in-school administrator. The parents/guardians of the complainant need to be contacted and made aware that the complaint has been made and that a formal resolution process has begun. Witnesses will be interviewed to confirm particulars.

Witnesses must be available for it to be a formal investigation, whenever possible.

The respondent is informed that a formal complaint has been made and the respondent's parents/guardians are contacted by the in-school administrator. The respondent is interviewed by the in-school administrator to clarify details of the incident(s) and to gain their perspective.

Upon completion of the investigation the in-school administrator will communicate the results to the complainant, respondent, and their parents/guardians.

3.2.3.2 ACTION PLAN

MEDIATION AND CONSEQUENCES

The investigation may lead to either a formal mediation process or to appropriate disciplinary action. In order for mediation to occur both parties must agree to engage in it. This mediation will be facilitated by trained in-school administrator or counsellor. Outcomes of the mediation may include a written or verbal apology with a commitment to end the harassment, a restitution process between the respondent and the complainant, or some level of short-term distancing of the parties within the school. Formal mediation does not preclude the possibility of disciplinary action administered through the school or school division. Appropriate disciplinary action would be administered through the in-school administrator's office **and may include, but is not limited to, suspension, transfer to another school, or expulsion from school.**

Whether or not the complainant and the family choose to make a formal complaint to police services, existing discipline and policies of the school and school division will apply.

3.3 PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

3.3.1 HOW PARENTS CAN DEAL WITH HARASSMENT

Parents believing that their child or another student is being harassed or bullied may choose to do the following:

PARENTS FOLLOW THROUGH

- a) If it is safe and comfortable to do so, parents are encouraged to invite students to follow the guidelines in (3.1.1 What the Target of Harassment Can Do)
- b) The parent may choose to accompany the child when and if the child reports the incident to an adult in the school.
- c) If the harassment continues or if the situation is of a moderate to severe nature it is recommended that the parents consult immediately with the in-school administration.
- d) Parents may contact police services if they believe a chargeable offense has occurred.

3.4 WHAT ALL LSSD STUDENTS OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT HARASSMENT

- a) Harassment is unacceptable conduct and not permitted in the Living Sky School Division.
- b) Harassment has impact on the individual involved and on the functioning on the classroom and the school generally.
- c) It is every student's responsibility to be aware of their behaviour and its affect on others. All students shall know or learn the difference between friendly, acceptable joking and harassment or bullying.
- d) If it is known that a certain behaviour is unwelcome and unwanted, the student should stop the behaviour.
- e) If someone tells a person that their behaviour results in them feeling uncomfortable, then the person should stop the behaviour.
- f) All students shall be made aware of the Student Harassment Protocol.

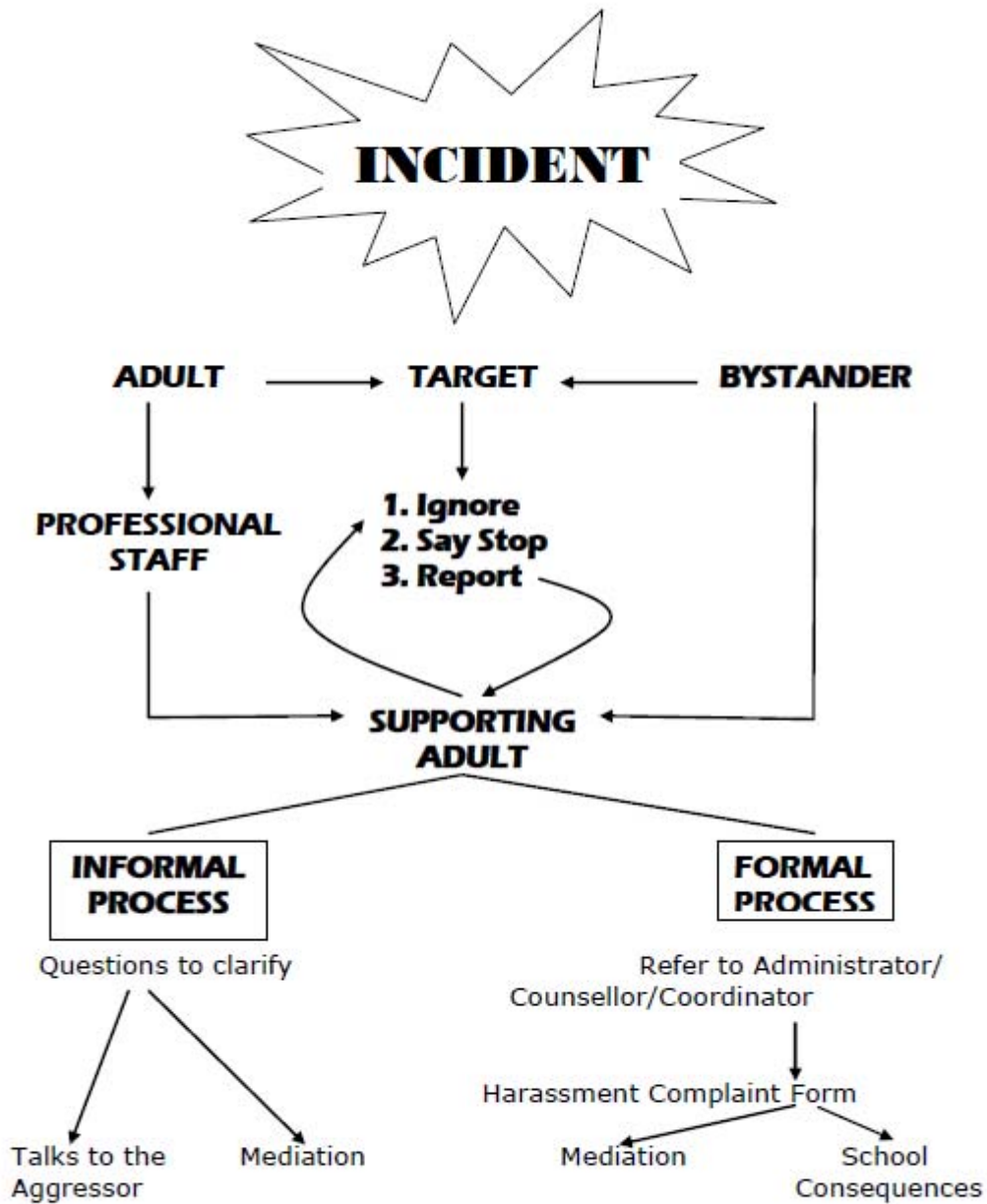


APPENDIX A| DEFINITIONS

<i>Target</i>	the intended recipient of harassment or bullying
<i>Aggressor</i>	the person thought to be harassing or bullying another, which includes any member of our educational community such as parents, volunteers, board members, teachers, educational assistants, etc.
<i>Adult</i>	supporting member of the professional staff who agrees to help the target through the intervention process
<i>Complainant</i>	the recipient of harassment or bullying when the situation has been raised to the level of a formal complaint
<i>Respondent</i>	the person alleged to having harassed or bullied another when the situation has been raised to the level of a formal complaint
<i>Formal Process</i>	process to be used to address harassment when the level of intentionality is perceived to be high or when the informal process has not been adequate
<i>Informal Process</i>	process to be used to address harassment when the level of intentionality is perceived to be low and no other interventions have been implemented.
<i>Mediation</i>	“a process in which an impartial facilitator assists parties in conflict to communicate and make voluntary, informed choices in an effort to find an acceptable way to resolve the dispute. The parties make the decisions about what is acceptable.” (Mediation Services, Saskatchewan Justice)
<i>School Personnel</i>	any employee of the school division who commonly works in the school
<i>Professional Staff</i>	a member of the teaching or counselling staff

APPENDIX B | FLOWCHART

Appendix B





Appendix C:

Harassment Complaint Form

This form is to be used when a formal complaint regarding harassment is made.

School:

Principal:

Complainant Name:

Age:

Grade:

Respondent Name:

Age:

Grade:

Type of Harassment: ☐ Physical ☐ Verbal ☐ Psychological ☐ Sexual

Details:

Describe the relationship between the complainant and the respondent.

What happened? How often has this happened?

Where did this behaviour occur?

Did anyone see this happen?

What did you do in response?

How did the respondent react to your response?

Who else have you told about this situation?

How did you feel when this behaviour occurred?

How has this affected you?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Living Sky School Division wishes to express its appreciation and acknowledge the professional contributions given by the Prairie Spirit School Division in the development of this protocol. This document is based on the *Prairie Spirit School Division Student Harassment Protocol* and *Saskatchewan's Action Plan to Address Bullying and Cyberbullying* (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, November 2013).

Saskatchewan's Action Plan to Address Bullying and Cyberbullying:

<http://www.education.gov.sk.ca//Anti-Bullying/campeau-report.pdf>

Living Sky School division also wishes to acknowledge and thank the members of the Living Sky School Division Anti-Bullying Action Committee who contributed to the development of this protocol.