

Anti-Bullying and Anti-Violence Plan

2020-2021



Goal: To prevent and stop all forms of bullying and violence targeting a student, a teacher or any other staff member. To work with all of our students, staff and parents in creating a safe and caring learning environment for everyone at Westpark Elementary.

Definitions

Bullying: refers to any repeated direct or indirect behavior, comment, act, or gesture, whether deliberate or not, including in cyberspace, which occurs in a context where there is a power imbalance between the persons concerned and which causes distress and injures, hurts, oppresses, intimidates or ostracizes.

Violence: refers to any intentional demonstration of verbal, written, physical, psychological or sexual force which causes distress and injures, hurts, or oppresses a person by attacking their psychological or physical integrity or well-being, or their rights or property.

Bullying must not be tolerated and requires intervention should it occur. Bullying occurs across all the social, cultural and socioeconomic contexts. It is a complex phenomenon with multiple origins.

Bullying is not fighting. Bullying is aggression (imbalance of power) and not necessarily a physical fight. A jostle, a fight, an insult or another threat restricted to two individuals on an equal power footing is not inevitably considered bullying.

Cyber-bullying. Bullying that occurs in the virtual world. It can occur whenever and from wherever: the virtual world is accessible at any time and from just about any place. It can bring together other witnesses, thereby allowing the immediate distribution of the words and images posted, in a way that is both unlimited and irreversible. It can occur in a secretive manner and forego the supervision of parents, teachers and other responsible adults.

1. Analysis of the School's Situation:

The Westpark Community pledges its support for the position of the Lester B. Pearson School Board's Safe and Caring School Policy with respect to school safety and security. To that end, Westpark is committed to working towards eliminating all forms of bullying and violence in its community and to taking a regular measure of its school climate as it relates to these particular issues.

Proposed Steps

- Westpark will poll the student population twice per year (November/April) through the 'Tell Them From Me' (TTFM) survey to identify the student perception of bullying. The first survey establishes the situation, and allows for the implementation of actions and strategies. The second survey indicates the degree of impact of the actions and strategies.
- Westpark will include Transportation/Bus Reports related to acts of bullying or violence as part of its general snapshot of the school's situation.
- In-school and out-of-school suspensions related to bullying and violent behaviour will be recorded and included in the snapshot.

2. Prevention Measures:

The Westpark Community holds firm in the conviction that education and dialogue are the keys to changing attitudes towards issues of bullying and violence in schools. As educators, we are committed to providing opportunities for all members of our community to explore these issues, share experiences, move towards a greater understanding of their underlying causes and build the capacity to rise above them. We acknowledge that changing attitudes and culture is a long-term process. To that end, established measures such as those listed below should be considered as part of a general plan to promote a safe and caring school environment.

Proposed Steps

- The Westpark Code of Conduct will be distributed to all school members and parents annually through the school agenda. The Code will be discussed and referenced in communications with the school community throughout the year so it remains an active document within the context of this plan.
- Westpark is committed to the goals and objectives of the LBPSB Digital Citizenship Project and its implication in this plan.

- Westpark will continue to/look towards implementing programs related to anti-violence and anti-bullying over the course of each school year. These programs may include:
 - Peaceful Schools Initiative
 - Dare to Care - Bullying Prevention Program
 - Socials Skills Program
 - Junior Leadership
 - The Westpark Social Media Awareness Program
 - Westpark's Code of Conduct
 - Westpark Anti-Bullying & Anti-Violence Plan
 - School projects i.e., posters on bullying
 - Parent Information Session
- Westpark will commit to a minimum of one presentation annually by an outside organization (play, team building activity, concert, etc.) which focuses on the theme of anti-violence or anti-bullying.
- Westpark will engage in ongoing student/teacher/staff/governing board information sessions on bullying and prevention.
- Westpark commits itself to including messages regarding anti-violence and anti-bullying during student assemblies or rotating class visits over the course of the academic year.

3. Measures to Encourage Parental Collaboration:

Parent collaboration and cooperation is critical to the success of any plan to eliminate bullying and violence in schools. The Westpark Community includes parents and volunteers and, as a consequence, it is understood that they are all committed to the goals and objectives of this plan. It is critical that parents and volunteers work with the school and engage in constructive dialogue on issues as they arise.

"The Lester B. Pearson School Board (also) believes that the school board's administrators, staff, parent, students and all those present in the school's environment have a responsibility to ensure that the right to be safe and secure is upheld."

Introduction, LBPSB Policy on Safe and Caring Schools, November 2008, p.4

Proposed Steps

- Westpark shall review and distribute the Westpark Anti-bullying, Anti-Violence plan annually. A permanent link to this document will be maintained on the Westpark website.

- The Westpark Code of Conduct will be distributed annually to members of the school community. This distribution will include a mechanism for receipt and review acknowledgement by parents.
- In collaboration with our Governing Board and Home and School, Westpark will present parent information sessions on specific topics of bullying and violence.
- Westpark commits to ongoing communication between all school personnel and the parents of children who are being bullied and those who engage in bullying behaviours, until complete resolution of the problem. Additionally, Westpark commits to periodic follow-up communication with the victim of bullying, and his/her parents to ensure that the measures taken have been successful.
- With regards to identifying students with behavioural difficulties – school principal/teacher/staff may make an initial contact at the beginning of the year to discuss how ‘we’ want the year to be successful for the student.

4. Procedures for Reporting:

All members of the Westpark Community are entitled to a safe, non-threatening and easily accessible process for reporting incidents of bullying or violent behavior regardless of whether they are victims, witnesses or a reporting party. It is understood that our process is designed to facilitate and encourage, not impede, the reporting of incidents.

Proposed Steps (Students)

- Westpark guarantees confidentiality for parties reporting incidents of bullying and/or violence. At the same time, we guarantee that the identified perpetrator is fully apprised of the details of the report made against him/her.
- Any Westpark student who witnesses an act of bullying or violence is responsible to tell a staff member at school, and an adult at home so as to allow those adults to follow-up with reporting as they see fit and necessary. The student may be expected to write down the incident in a brief report.

Proposed Steps (Parents)

- Members of the Westpark parent community who are made aware of a bullying situation or act of violence involving either their own child or another student of the school are obliged to contact the school Principal, the classroom teacher and other staff. This contact and subsequent follow-up will be documented by Westpark personnel.

- Within two days of receiving the report, the reporting parent may be contacted by the school, to be assured that the situation is being investigated and that appropriate action(s) is being taken. Further details will be limited in order to insure confidentiality of parties involved.
- Westpark invites the following forms of contact from parents:
 - Direct phone call/email to school administrator.
 - Letter detailing issue or incident addressed to school administrator, classroom teacher and support staff.

5. Actions to Be Taken When Observing a Bullying or Violent Act:

No member of the Westpark Community will be indifferent towards reported or witnessed acts of violence and bullying. We are committed to responding to and investigating any report we receive which suggests that an incident of violence and/or bullying has taken place amongst our population. Furthermore, we are committed to considering all available facts in a timely and efficient manner.

Proposed Steps

- Staff members will intervene when observing an apparent act of bullying or violence. If the staff member considers his/her intervention in the situation successful, student is not referred to administration. However, an intervention report must be filed and submitted to the principal if the staff member considers the incident to be one of violence or bullying.
- The staff member may determine that the student involved in the bullying and/or violent behaviour should be sent directly to administration, depending on the severity of the incident.
- A Westpark student may intervene if the situation does not threaten his /her well-being and/or may choose to seek the assistance of a staff member.
- Any Westpark student who witnesses an incident of violence or bullying must report the incident to the appropriate staff member in the school using the established protocols (refer to 4 in this plan).
- Any member of the Westpark parent community who is witness to an act of bullying or violence is expected to report that incident directly to the school administration. The steps that are undertaken include investigation of the report, appropriate measures taken and appropriate follow-up as per Section 4 of this plan.

Note: *All Westpark reports regarding incidents of violence and/or bullying may be forwarded to the appropriate Regional Director in cases where students are excluded from their regular course of studies as a consequence of their actions.*

6. Measures to Protect Confidentiality:

As part of the investigative and follow-up processes, Westpark is committed to maintaining fair, accurate and confidential records of each reported incident of bullying or violence, regardless of the investigative outcome. These records will include specific details on the incidents in question, the steps taken by the school as a consequence of its investigation and indication of intended follow-up. Westpark is committed to keeping these records confidential and secure so as to protect all parties regardless of their role in the incident.

Proposed Steps

- The Westpark anti-violence/anti-bullying plan will be reviewed annually and all staff are reminded that every incident and the follow-up must be kept confidential.
- In all instances and procedures, sensitivity to the fears and feelings of all parties must be kept in mind.
- Members of the Westpark Community agree that in all cases involving minor students, information shared should be on a need to know basis only.
- All parties acknowledge that Westpark personnel are not obliged to share information about another student with anyone but other staff members and parents of that student.

7. Supervisory or Support Measure for Victims, Witness, and Perpetrator:

All members of the Westpark Community will be thorough in their treatment of reported cases of bullying or violence. They pledge to intervene in an appropriate manner, request the intervention of school administration if necessary and report the incident as per the process described in Section 6 of the plan.

Proposed Steps (Victim)

- An adult staff member will determine the severity and frequency of the incident(s) through a discussion with the student. The adult may be the classroom teacher,

administrator or another adult staff member with whom the student is comfortable talking.

- A Westpark staff member will conduct scheduled follow-up meetings with the student to ensure the bullying or violence has stopped and to provide support to the student. The degree of support offered at these meetings and their frequency shall depend upon the feedback from the victim regarding the current circumstance.
- In all cases, a determination by administration will be made as to which members of the school staff must be made aware of the incident to ensure that the student is safe.
- Parents will be informed immediately following the incident and regularly updated until the situation is resolved. Referral for counselling through the LBPSB Student Services Department or through outside referral will be requested when deemed appropriate.
- The victim will be engaged in discussion or follow-up meetings with their support contact to ensure establishment of a sense of security
- In some cases, the school team may suggest a referral to the school social worker, make a CSSS referral for victim services, suggest the involvement of the victim in a social skills group or may suggest referral to an outside agency for support or services if it feels such services are warranted.
- In all cases, victims of bullying or violence should have a reasonable expectation of feedback from intervening adult figure in a timely manner so as to guarantee a sense of safety and security in the school.
- In cases, where victims of bullying or violence feel that the situation has not been resolved at the school level, they can contact the school board for further guidance

Proposed Steps (Bystander)

- Following the incident, an intervention may be held with any bystanders to determine their role in the incident. If the incident witnessed is severe, bystanders are met, in a group or individually, to debrief the event, discuss their role and to determine more appropriate actions in the future.
- Consequences are applied, if appropriate for students that are actively involved in encouraging the incident.
- Westpark reserves the right to contact the parents of bystanders when it feels such contact is appropriate.
- As with victims, witnesses to acts of bullying or violence should have a reasonable expectation of feedback from intervening adult figure in a timely manner so as to guarantee a sense of safety and security in the school.

Proposed Steps (Perpetrator)

- The initial intervention with the perpetrator is managed by the Westpark staff member who intervened and the incident is reported to the office.

- The adult who intervenes or adult who is told of an incident makes a report to the office (or the person designated to receive reports). Once an investigation has been completed and the incident is confirmed to be bullying and/or violence, the Westpark Principal meets with the perpetrator. The perpetrator is told of the report, discusses the incident and is given a consequence.
- The perpetrator's parents are called and informed of the incident and the consequences. The parents may be asked to come to school for a follow-up meeting.
- In cases where it is deemed necessary and appropriate, Westpark may refer the perpetrator and his/her parents to support services available to the school.
- Westpark is responsible to inform parents of their right to request assistance from the person designated by the School Board for referral to support services.
- It is expected that following any intervention, the perpetrator must report to the principal or designate for follow-up discussion concerning the incident in question.
- Parents are requested to collaborate and be part of the plan which includes sanctions but also support as per Section 3 of this plan.
- In any circumstance, intervention with a perpetrator of an act of violence or bullying at Westpark may include a therapeutic intervention as a means of support. Such interventions may include:
 - Possible placement in another classroom within the school
 - Referral to an outside organization for support (CSSS)
 - Referral to a therapeutic or educational program focused on challenging behaviours
 - Intervention of CSSS Social Worker or a socio-community police officer

8. Disciplinary Sanctions:

The Westpark Community is committed to applying fair, consistent and appropriate sanctions in all cases where it has determined that acts of bullying or violence have taken place. These sanctions will always be applied with the understanding the long-term objective is for rehabilitation and reintegration but that the safety of the whole will never be subordinate to that objective.

"Any disciplinary action must be fair, equitable and consistent with the general aims and goals of education. Whenever possible, the disciplinary action should allow for effective learning."

Proposed Steps

- The perpetrator will engage in a discussion with the adult who witnesses or is told of the incident. A report goes to the Principal. Parents will be informed if the incident is deemed to be an act of bullying or violence.
- Westpark may request the supervision of the perpetrator during free time; i.e. must be shadowed by a supervisor during recess and at lunch time.
- Detention of the perpetrator may be requested. During this time there is a discussion with the supervising staff member about the incident and how to better deal with similar situations should they occur.
- Westpark staff member may request that the perpetrator is sent to the office or other designated area while the initial investigation of the incident is being carried out.

•In all instances these measures are applied at the discretion of the principal or his/her delegate taking into account the circumstances and severity and number of offenses.

•Any and all disciplinary measures included in the school's Code of Conduct must in alignment with the LBPSB Safe and Caring Schools Policy.

9. Required Follow-Ups:

The Westpark Community recognizes that once the initial investigation and response process has been completed, supervisory or support measures may need to be put in place for the perpetrator, the victim and, when deemed necessary, the witnesses to an act of bullying or violence. The extent of these follow-up measures will depend upon the nature of the incident and the degree to which it is believed that long-term intervention is necessary.

Proposed Steps

- Westpark commits to ongoing discussion with the **victim** and, if necessary, his/her parent regarding the school's intervention and any actions required subsequent to the initial investigation and intervention.
- Should it be considered necessary, Westpark commits to a follow-up discussion with any **witness** supporting the action taken by witness if a report was made.
- Westpark will not be indifferent to instances where **witnesses** to acts of violence or bullying fail to intervene or report such incidents to an adult in the building (bystander). In such cases, Westpark commits to making the bystander aware of the school's expectation and his/her responsibility to intervene or report in such circumstances.

- Westpark will meet with the perpetrator and his/her parent to discuss possible further sanctions and further consequences if another act occurs. The contents of this meeting will be documented and recorded for future reference if necessary.
- A summary report of the incident and follow-up measures taken are sent to the Director General or his/her delegate.



Westpark Elementary School