



Quispamsis Middle School *ANTI-BULLYING POLICY*

Statement of Intent

We, **the community and supporters of Quispamsis Middle School**, are committed to providing a compassionate, receptive and non-threatening atmosphere for each and every one of our pupils to learn and succeed in. Accordingly, we have a “zero-tolerance” policy against bullying, meaning that bullying of any sort is deemed unacceptable in our school community. If bullying does occur, students should be assured of the fact that all incidents will be addressed quickly, and fairly.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying can be generally defined as the use of aggression, intimidation and/or cruelty with the result of hurting another person verbally, physically or emotionally. Bullying is never justified and is not excusable as “kids being kids,” “just teasing” or any other rationalization.

Specific types of bullying may include:

* **Verbal Bullying**-name-calling, sarcasm, teasing, spreading rumors, threatening, making negative references to one’s culture, ethnicity, race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation, unwanted sexual comments.

***Social Bullying**-mobbing, scapegoating, excluding others from a group, humiliating others with public gestures.

***Physical bullying**-hitting, poking, pinching, chasing, shoving, coercing, destroying or stealing belongings, unwanted sexual touching.

***Cyber Bullying**-using the internet or text messaging to intimidate, put-down, spread rumors or make fun of someone.

***Racist/intolerant**- Taunts, slurs and/or physical threats directed around a victim’s race, religion or ethnicity.

***Sexual**-Initiating and/or executing unwanted physical contact, making sexually threatening and/or abusive comments.

Policy Objectives

* The principal, vice-principal, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents should have a full understanding of what bullying is and encompasses;

* All school staff should be thoroughly familiar with the bullying policy, and should follow it appropriately when bullying is reported or observed;

* All students and parents should be thoroughly familiar with the bullying policy, and should know what steps to take when bullying occurs;

* Students and parents should be reassured that the school takes bullying seriously, and will support victims and their families when bullying is reported;

Bullying will not be excused, permitted or tolerated!

Warning Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

* Not all victims of bullying will let on that they are suffering at school. Many feel that admitting how bad things have gotten will increase the torment. Victims may believe that no one will believe or support them. Another reason might be that they are too embarrassed to admit what is happening.

* Parents and staff members of Quispamsis Middle School should openly encourage students to report incidents of bullying that are observed or experienced firsthand.

* **Adults should be aware of these symptoms and what they signify, and should investigate immediately.**

A child may be a victim of bullying if he or she exhibits the following:

- * Becomes withdrawn and is reluctant to explain why
- * Appears continually tired (perhaps due to lack of sleep induced by worry)
- * Deterioration of educational attainment
- * Items of clothing, personal property and/or school work is damaged or lost more often than considered normal
- * Frequent injuries (cuts, bruises)
- * Deterioration in attendance/truancy/school refusal
- * Frequent complaints of illness
- * Changing routes to and from school
- * Complaints of hunger (possibly indicating that lunch money is being taken)
- * Money/possessions going missing
- * Depression – reluctant to socialize
- * Moodiness and irritability
- * Threats of self-harm

- * Actual self-harm

It should be noted that the above signs may indicate other problems, but bullying should promptly be considered a possibility and looked into.

Proper Bullying Report/Response Procedures

1. Reporting

- * All students should be encouraged to report bullying to any trusted adult or to a buddy/peer helper who will then alert staff.
- * Students must be listened to and reports of bullying taken seriously.
- * All reports will be acted upon at all times by all staff.
- * Incidents of bullying must be dealt with promptly (within 24 hours) by the staff member to whom it has been reported.
- * Staff members are encouraged to use the Bullying Pyramid of Intervention (page 7).
- * Students/Parents are encouraged to use the QMS Bullying Hotline (849-5511).
- * Staff member will record all reported bullying incidents and will share extreme cases with Administration/Guidance Counsellor.
- * Parents of both victim and bully may be informed and asked to visit the school for a meeting about the problem.
- * In severe instances, local police may be contacted.

2. Action

Prompt investigation of indicators or allegations of bullying must occur.

Investigation should include the following practical steps:

- * Encourage the student to co-operate fully in identifying the bullies.
- * Establish what led to the incident and, where appropriate, what steps can be reasonably taken to avoid similar situations in the future.
- * Interview students individually where allegations of bullying are made about a group.
- * The staff member who receives a bullying complaint will contact both sets of parents (victim and bully).
- * The outcomes of any investigation must be communicated to those involved.
- * Everybody involved must see action being taken.
- * The bullying behavior or threats will be investigated quickly and fully, all involved will be informed that the behavior will/must stop immediately.
- * After the incident has been thoroughly investigated and dealt with, faculty and counselor will monitor both students (including regular "check-ins") to ensure that bullying does not resume or reoccur

3. Recording Incidents

- * Incidents of bullying should be recorded by individual staff.
- * Phone Log (Staff Handbook)
- * Administration/Guidance (Winschool)

4. Responsibilities

*All staff members are equally responsible for the implementation of the policy and for taking action on bullying.

*In order to reduce the opportunities for bullying all staff must be vigilant in their supervisory duties and must visit places where bullying is most likely to occur on a regular basis.(washrooms, locker room, cafeteria, field).

*All students must report incidents of bullying and need to see this as responsible behaviour rather than tattling.

* Quispamsis Middle School Staff will regularly discuss anti-bullying strategies.

*Anti-bullying must be addressed through assemblies and the Personal Development and Career Planning curriculum.

Tools for Prevention and Education

Quispamsis Middle School will adopt any/all of the following tools to prevent and educate students about bullying:

* Writing, posting/otherwise making very visible a set of descriptive school rules.

* Making this policy available to all students, staff members and parents.

* Engaging students in role-playing, creative writing exercises and/or open discussions about bullying. (Guidance/PDCP classes)

* Emphasizing the importance of reporting incidents of bullying which have been observed or experienced.

ADVICE FOR STUDENTS

If you are being bullied:

* First, you need to know that you are NOT alone in being bullied. You need to know that being bullied is NOT YOUR FAULT.

* Bullies might try to hurt you and control you by telling you that your hair or skin colour, size, sex, race, religion and other things are bad. **Don't believe bullies!!**

* Bullying is really about others who want to have power and control over you. People who bully want you to feel badly about yourself. Don't give bullies that power.

* Don't keep it to yourself: tell an adult, teacher, peer helper, guidance counsellor, principal/vice-principal..

* Write down what happened.

* Telling is not tattling.

* Be brave.

* Stay calm and don't act upset or angry.

* Ignore the people who bully.

* If ignoring them won't work, tell the people who are bullying to stop.

* Refuse to join in.

* Call the QMS Bully Hotline 849-5511

If you witness bullying:

- * Don't join in.
- * Walk away. Did you know that bullying usually stops within 10 seconds after someone who is watching (a bystander) gets involved?
- * Get help from an adult or yell for help if you need to.
- * DO NOT try to fight the bully. It'll just make things worse for you and everyone else.
- * Believe the kid being bullied. Listen to what they have to say.
- * Don't make the bully feel important by paying attention to them. When you ignore bullies, you take away their power.
- * Make sure the kid who's being bullied tells an adult. Offer to go with them if it will help.
- * If he or she doesn't want to talk to anybody, offer to talk to someone they trust for them.
- * Involve as many people as possible, including other friends or classmates, parents, teachers, school counselors and the principal.
- * Do not ignore what happens.
- * Let the person who is being bullied know that you have witnessed what is going on and that you are concerned.
- * Encourage them to tell someone.
- * If it is in school and you are worried about it, REPORT it. If you are worried about putting yourself at risk ask to speak to someone in confidence or write them a note about what happened.

**** Teachers are often the last to know that bullying is going on. If they are going to do something about it they need to know what is happening. *****

If you are bullying someone:

- * You need to realize that hurting other people doesn't make you important, it just makes you mean.
- * Think about ways you can be a leader without hurting others.
- * People who continue to bully when they are young, often end up being in trouble with the law and having many other serious problems.
- * Being a bully is a dead-end road to take in your life.
- * There's is nothing good about being a bully.
- * *You have a choice – just because you have bullied others in the past does not mean that you have to keep doing it.*
- * People who are bullied can feel scared and upset. You can put a stop to that by changing your behaviour.
- * You can get into trouble if you keep bullying others – you might be excluded from school and in some cases the police may be involved.
- * Sometimes things happen to you to make you more likely to bully others, for example being bullied yourself or trouble at home. It is important to get help for yourself rather than taking your frustrations out on others.

Advice for Parents/Guardians

What should I do if I suspect my child is being bullied?

*Inform school immediately (even if you are unsure). Ask to speak to your child's homeroom Teacher or the Guidance Counsellor.

* Follow the advice for student support (see above).

*Keep a written record of what your child says about bullying – note down who, where, when and what happened. This is particularly important if the problem persists. (Also keep any text messages your child receives, as “cyber” bullying is as hurtful as other forms.)

*Talk to the school about strategies that will help your child and provide him/her with support both inside and outside school.

* If the problems persist outside school, please note that we have no jurisdiction to deal with these situations and the police should be involved.

How do I support my child if they are the target of bullying?

*Once you are sure that bullying is happening reassure your child that they are not to blame – it is not their fault.

* Encourage your child to talk to someone, preferably an adult, in school that they trust/like. This does not have to be a teacher; it can be the Guidance Counsellor, Principal, and Vice-Principal...

*Talk about where it happens and work out simple ways to avoid those locations/situations. This is not always possible so advise your child to make sure there are other people around who they trust, for example, friends, peers, adults.

*Take an interest in your child's social life. Encourage friendships, discuss their day including what they did at break or lunchtime.

* Discuss their journey to and from school.

* Do not encourage or advise your child to retaliate or hit back.



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(Promoting a Peaceful School)

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