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# Safe and Caring Schools

**Taking Action  
Against Bullying**

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Print copies of this resource can be purchased from the Manitoba Text Book Bureau (stock number 80691). Order online at <[www.mtbb.mb.ca](http://www.mtbb.mb.ca)>.

This resource is also available on the Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning website at <[www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/safe\\_schools/index.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/safe_schools/index.html)>.

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Available in alternate formats upon request.

## Purpose

The information in *Safe and Caring Schools: Taking Action Against Bullying* summarizes current Manitoba legislation and is intended to help adults who work in schools identify incidents of bullying and know what to report, how to report, and when to contact parents. This document will also inform parents of the requirement for schools to report bullying and to contact parents.



# What is Manitoba doing about bullying?

Manitoba's Anti-bullying Action Plan includes

- help for teachers, including expanded training supports, workshops, and other professional learning opportunities, and ongoing support for the Respect in School initiative
- help for parents, including new online information and resources on how to recognize, deal with, and report bullying
- help for students, including using the Tell Them From Me Survey to allow schools to hear directly from students about bullying—schools are encouraged to use the TTFM Survey to evaluate the effectiveness of their anti-bullying efforts and to develop new strategies based on the results

## Legislation

In 2004, the Manitoba government made it law that schools ensure safe and caring environments for all students. *The Safe Schools Charter* requires all Manitoba schools to keep their safety policies appropriate and current with the assistance of a Safe Schools Advisory Committee.

In addition, every school in Manitoba must have a code of conduct that protects students by addressing

- bullying
- discrimination
- possession of weapons
- abuse
- gang activity
- appeal mechanisms for disciplinary consequences
- Internet use
- disciplinary consequences
- use and possession of alcohol and drugs

In 2008, Manitoba introduced *The Public Schools Amendment Act (Cyber-Bullying and Electronic Devices)*.

In 2011, *The Public Schools Act* was amended to require adults in schools to report unacceptable student conduct.

In 2013, *The Public Schools Act* was amended with a revised definition of bullying and to require adults in schools to report cyberbullying when they become aware of it.

School boards must establish written policy respecting the appropriate use of

- the Internet, including social media, text messaging, instant messaging, websites, and email
- digital cameras, cell phones, and any other electronic or personal communication devices identified by the board

Appropriate-use policies may include provisions that prohibit the accessing, uploading, downloading, sharing, or distribution of information or material that the school board has determined to be objectionable or not in keeping with the maintenance of a positive school environment.

School boards must establish written policy regarding respect for human diversity and must ensure that it is implemented in each school. The policy must promote and enhance a safe and inclusive learning environment, the acceptance of and respect for others, a positive school environment, and the training of teachers and other staff on bullying prevention and respect for human diversity.

The *Appropriate Disciplinary Consequences in Schools Regulation 92/2013* under *The Education Administration Act* confirms and restates the authority of principals, schools, and school divisions.

A provincial code of conduct, in the form of a ministerial directive, requires principals of Manitoba schools to ensure that appropriate interventions and disciplinary consequences are included in their school codes of conduct. All schools are expected to comply with the *Provincial Code of Conduct*.

## What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour that is intended to cause fear, intimidation, humiliation, distress, or other forms of harm to another person's feelings, self-esteem, body, or reputation or is intended to create a negative school environment for another person.

Bullying takes place in a context of a real or perceived power imbalance between the people involved and is typically, but need not be, repeated behaviour.

It may be direct (face to face) or indirect (through others), and it may take place through any form of expression—including written, verbal, or physical—or by means of any form of electronic communication (referred to as cyberbullying), including social media, text messaging, instant messaging, websites, or email.

## When does a person participate in bullying?

A person participates in bullying if he or she directly carries out the bullying behaviour or intentionally assists or encourages the bullying behaviour in any way.

## What types of bullying can occur?

The most common types of bullying are

- verbal or written bullying (e.g., calling people names or laughing about weaknesses)
- physical bullying (e.g., physical aggression such as hitting, kicking, punching, or shoving someone, as well as destroying someone's belongings)



- social bullying (e.g., harmful rumours, excluding or shunning, ignoring, getting others not to be friends with a child, using negative facial expressions and body language, such as eye rolling or turning a cold shoulder)
- cyber- or electronic bullying (e.g., using technology, such as a cell phone, social media, such as Facebook or Twitter, or the Internet to harm someone)—cyberbullying may use text messages, social networking sites, email, or the posting of embarrassing pictures or videos on the Internet (Craig, Pepler, and Cummings)

## What is the difference between unacceptable conduct and conflict?

Conflict is a disagreement or argument that results from people’s different needs, interests, opinions, beliefs, or values. Conflict is a natural part of human interaction and learning and is not necessarily a bad thing. Conflict may or may not develop into unacceptable conduct. Conflict may be dealt with as a learning experience or according to a school’s code of conduct. Unacceptable conduct is to be reported to the principal of the school.

## What must be reported to the principal?



Upon becoming aware that a student may have engaged in “unacceptable conduct” while at school or at a prescribed school-approved activity, adults in schools must report the matter to the principal of the school as soon as reasonably possible. The duty to report also includes awareness that a student may have engaged in cyberbullying or been negatively affected by cyberbullying, whether it occurs during school hours or not.

Adults in schools include employees of a school or school division and persons having care and charge of students during a prescribed school-approved activity.

“Unacceptable conduct” means abusing another student physically, sexually, or psychologically—orally, in writing, or otherwise—or bullying another student. This behaviour may also occur while students are on their way to and from school.

## What cyberbullying is to be reported?



Bullying by means of any form of electronic communication, including social media, text messaging, instant messaging, websites, or email, is cyberbullying.

When adults in schools become aware that a student is engaging in any type of cyberbullying, or has been negatively affected by cyberbullying, they must report the matter to the principal. This requirement applies even when the

cyberbullying occurs outside of school hours, due to its negative impact on the school environment.

## Who are people who have care and charge of students?

In addition to principals and teachers, people who may have care and charge of students include school clinicians, educational assistants, student teachers, volunteers, or others who have been authorized by the school board.

## What is a prescribed school-approved activity?

Everyday school activities do not require parental consent. When parental consent is required for a student to attend or participate in a school activity, it is a school-approved activity (e.g., field trips, extracurricular activities).

## What is the principal's duty to notify a parent or guardian?

If the principal believes that a student of the school has been harmed as a result of bullying, the principal must, as soon as reasonably possible, notify the student's parent or guardian.

The principal must provide information on the nature of the unacceptable conduct that resulted in harm to the student, the nature of the harm to the student, and the steps taken to protect the student's safety, including the nature of any disciplinary measures taken in response to the unacceptable conduct. This may include reference to the school's code of conduct or the school board's appropriate-use policy.

When notifying a parent or guardian, the principal must not disclose the name of or any other personal information about a student who engaged in the unacceptable conduct.

## Is there a process for appealing disciplinary decisions?

School divisions and parents sometimes disagree about the disciplining of students, and it is necessary that a timely, fair, and open dispute resolution process be available at the local school and school division levels. This process should be communicated to parents.

Schools are required to include the following in their school codes of conduct:

- the *Provincial Code of Conduct: Appropriate Interventions and Disciplinary Consequences*
- disciplinary consequences, in as much detail as is reasonably possible
- the process for appealing disciplinary decisions

## What are Manitoba schools doing about bullying?

**Code of Conduct**—All schools are required to establish a code of conduct for students and staff and to review that code of conduct at least annually. A code of conduct outlines a school's behavioural expectations and disciplinary measures.

**Preventative Practices**—All schools are expected to engage in preventative practices, in other words, the use of instruction and programming that focus on positive school climates and social responsibility. Themes common to a successful approach include the development of a positive school climate, a positive school-wide approach, team planning, community involvement, and professional support. This includes teaching the Manitoba curriculum and using such approaches as outlined in *A Whole-School Approach to Safety and Belonging: Preventing Violence and Bullying* and/or programming that builds character and social responsibility. Selection of resources is a school/school division decision.

Examples include the following:

- PREVNet (Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network)
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
- Circle of Courage
- Canadian Red Cross—Beyond the Hurt: A Comprehensive Approach to Bullying and Harassment
- PAX Good Behaviour Game
- Respect in School
- Roots of Empathy
- Lion's Quest
- Second Step

**Responsive Practices**—Many schools have successfully introduced responsive practices that aim to develop community and manage conflict and tensions by repairing harm and building relationships. They can reduce conflict, reduce the need for punitive sanctions, and create a happier, safer school that deals effectively with conflict.

Examples include the following:

- conflict resolution programming
- peer mediation programming
- restitution
- restorative practices

## How can I learn more about how bullying is addressed in Manitoba schools?

- **Consult your local school or school division.**
- **Consult Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning resources.**

Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning provides a variety of resources for schools, families, and communities related to creating and sustaining safe and caring schools. Visit the following:

- [Safe and Caring Schools](#)
- [Safe and Caring Schools: Manitoba Education Initiatives and Documents](#)
- [Safe and Caring Schools: Stop Bullying](#)

The [Administrative Handbook for Schools](#) provides summaries of legislation and government policies and directives on such topics as “Codes of Conduct,” “Discipline,” “Reporting of Unacceptable Conduct,” “Suspension,” and “Volunteers.”

- **Consult Safe Schools Manitoba.**

[Safe Schools Manitoba](#) is a partnership initiative of organizations committed to working together to enhance the safety of Manitoba’s schools and communities.

On this website, you will find many resources to help you understand, prevent, and address problems that threaten the safety of young people.

- **Consult Manitoba legislation.**

- [The Public Schools Act](#)
  - [MR 37/2012 Reporting Bullying](#)
- [The Education Administration Act](#)
  - [MR 23/2000 Persons Having Care and Charge of Pupils](#)
  - [MR 92/2013 Appropriate Disciplinary Consequences in Schools](#)

## Philosophy of Inclusion

Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning is committed to fostering inclusion for all people.

Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that allows every individual to feel accepted, valued, and safe. An inclusive community consciously evolves to meet the changing needs of its members. Through recognition and support, an inclusive community provides meaningful involvement and equal access to the benefits of citizenship.

In Manitoba we embrace inclusion as a means of enhancing the well-being of every member of the community. By working together, we strengthen our capacity to provide the foundation for a richer future for all of us.

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