Turtle Mountain School Division

Safe and Caring Schools Support Document
April 2014

Appendix to Policies/Procedures:

H1-Student Code of Conduct

H-2-Respect for Human Diversity

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Introduction

This document was developed by a divisional committee comprised of Turtle Mountain School Division guidance counselors, school administrators, parents, students, trustee representation, and senior administration. The purpose of the document is to promote a common understanding throughout TMSD regarding expectations to promote and maintain safe and caring school environments for all students. As part of conducting its work the committee reviewed the current TMSD strategic plan, information shared by the guidance consultant from Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, divisional data from the Tell Them From Me Survey, the Provincial Code of Conduct as distributed by Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning in January 2014, and the Respect for Human Diversity Support Document provided by Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning.

The committee referenced a number of areas in which effective programming currently exists to promote safe and caring schools within TMSD. These will be noted, as will areas of concern which the committee identified as requiring attention. The intent is to provide schools with a "where are we now/where do we need to go" picture within TMSD. Also included is a framework which will articulate key components of what effective safe schools programming should include at three levels, primary, secondary, and tertiary.

Finally, a list of resources/links will be provided which are meant to provide options for schools when external programming sources are being sought as well as to provide information sources to share with staff, parents, and students.

Key Components of Safe Schools Programming

1. Safe schools programming must involve a whole-school approach which is the shared responsibility of all staff; it is not the sole responsibility of one person or department within a school. It must, however, have leadership at the school level. This can come in the form of a **safe school committee** which meets regularly to discuss ongoing successes/challenges, preventative programming/awareness initiatives, as well as measures to deal with incidents when they occur. A committee such as this could be led by school administration, guidance, or another representative in the school, and should include staff, administration, parent, and student representation. Information gleaned from the work of this committee should also be shared and discussed with Parent Councils. Further, schools must maintain communication with parents, in a variety of forms, in terms of the role parents can play to promote the safety and well-being of our youth. Communication strategies can include newsletters, parent information evenings, information posted on school/division websites, email, or other electronic communication methods.

2. There must be a **common understanding of what bullying/cyber-bullying is in its various forms (see attached appendix of definitions)**, and there must be clearly articulated statements within the school community that it is unacceptable whether it occurs at school, to or from school, on the school bus, or within the community. It must also be clearly understood that staff are required to bring any concerns to the attention of the school principal, and that in accordance with the Public Schools Act the principal has the authority and responsibility to act when concerns are brought forward.

3. Programming should focus on **empowerment and resiliency, and be strength-based**. Everyone in the school community should have a clear sense of who they can talk to in the event they are being targeted. This can include but is not limited to guidance personnel, classroom teachers and/or teacher advisors, school administration, or external outlets such as the Kids Help Phone line or www.stopabully.ca.

4. Students and staff alike should **model respect at all times**. The focus should not exclusively be on correcting unwanted behaviour in isolation, but rather on preventing the unwanted behaviour by promoting a respectful school climate where collectively (all staff, all students) there is no tolerance for harassment/abuse. Virtues/strategies associated with safe and caring schools, such as compassion, empathy, acceptance, conflict resolution must be woven consistently into classroom instruction (whether with a classroom teacher and/or a teacher advisor).

5. In terms of prevention and response, these should be considered at several levels (**Primary, Secondary, Tertiary**).
    a. Primary Prevention (all students in school, universal prevention strategies)

      i.   Involves all students
     ii.   Includes regular classroom instruction/activities in relation to appropriate behaviours
   iii.   Promotes positive school climate
   iv.   Prevention through classroom practices/transition planning
    v.   Codes of conduct
   vi.   Adequate adult supervision (especially during transition/break times and in common areas)
  vii.   Connection with students (building relationships)
 viii.   Promotion of diversity and inclusion
   ix.   Literacy with ICT, and overall responsible use of technology as a digital citizen
    x.   Guidance involvement, direct and integrated
   xi.   Curricular connections at early, middle, senior years
  xii.   Use of programs as a school-based resource

b. <u>Secondary Prevention (students who may need additional support, intended to lessen the problem)</u>

      i.   Early Intervention and support
     ii.   Multi-layered approach, increased monitoring and positive attention, possible social skills instruction, individual counseling, advocacy, mediation
   iii.   Collaborative planning amongst parents, guidance, staff, possible external resources

c. <u>Tertiary Prevention (minimizing immediate consequences of an existing severe problem)</u>

      i.   Transitional counseling and re-integration planning for suspended students, stabilizing a student who is suicidal, and de-escalating a student exhibiting explosive behavior
     ii.   Intensive prevention strategies
   iii.   Individualized academic or behaviour intervention planning
   iv.   School, family, community mental health supports

A Focus on Cyber-Bullying

There should be further distinction that **cyber-bullying activity comes with its own set of unique challenges**:

    a. Targeted students can be subjected to the behaviour with no limits on time or location.

    b. It can occur anonymously

    c. Students who are less likely to be cruel face to face can hide behind technology.

    d. It must be clearly conveyed that acts of abuse/bullying can be acted upon at the school level as it can jeopardize the safety of students.

As stated earlier, cyber-bullying has become more prominent as the use of personal communication devices and social media has continued to grow steadily. It can include threatening messages, non-consensual forwarding of personal emails, the creation of false profiles, or the spreading of false information. The following are further considerations:

1. Students will often hesitate to involve an adult when being targeted because they feel the adult will not understand, cannot do anything, or they fear their technology will be taken away.
2. It can often be associated with real-world bullying.
3. Signs of cyber-bullying can include:
    a. Sudden reluctance to go online or use a smart phone
    b. Avoiding a discussion about what a person is doing online
    c. Depression, mood swings, change in eating habits, a disinterest in school and activities
    d. Closing a browser or turning off a cell phone when a parent walks in the room, though this can also be a sign of an inappropriate relationship or just an insistence of privacy
4. Responding to cyber-bullying:
    a. Pause and listen, meet with all parties involved including parents if possible
    b. Interview parties thoroughly and individually, get details
    c. Involve parents and indicate that cyber-bullying is taken very seriously, and within the context of school safety can be acted upon at the school level
    d. Convey to targeted student that he/she has unconditional support
    e. Contact internet provider or website host to attempt to have offensive material removed, involve R.C.M.P.
    f. Promote and maintain a strong communication link, targeted student should feel he/she is not alone and has someone to talk to

Other Considerations:

1. What Not to Do:
    a. Grouping students together who have engaged in bullying behaviour can create a sense of empowerment and may reinforce aggressive behaviour
    b. Conflict resolution, even when facilitated by an adult, is not typically recommended for situations involving bullying because it supposes a disagreement between two people of equal power which is not the case
    c. One day awareness events or brief assemblies, by themselves, do little to change bullying behaviour or a culture in which it occurs
    d. Discipline alone (ex: suspension), though it speaks to student safety by removing the threatening student, is not effective in preventing further unwanted behaviour
2. Youth Have a Critical Role to Play:
    a. Those who are aware that someone is being bullied/cyber-bullied often don't want to get involved for fear of becoming the target. Schools need to have clear, discreet, and protective reporting mechanisms of which all students are aware, and students must be regularly reminded of this.
    b. When a targeted student feels he/she has some peer support, it can make a huge difference in the life of the student.
    c. Students need to make sure they don't indirectly or directly contribute to the behaviour by forwarding hurtful messages, joining to "fit in," or remaining silent. (Choosing to select "like" beside a hurtful comment on a social media site is unacceptable because it adds to what is already a painful message.)
3. Communication/Connection is key, parents/significant adults need to take an interest in what students are doing online and encourage youth to be trusting and communicative.

Current Safe/Caring School Initiatives in TMSD

The committee identified a number of programs/initiatives which have been employed within TMSD to promote safe and caring schools. These included:

Program/Initiative	Staff Involved	Students Involved	Further Action
Pax-Good Behaviour Game	Gr. 1 staff Kill/K-3 Boiss & Minto /K-8 Mayfair	KCI/BCI/Minto/Mayfair, grade 1-8 depending on school	
Peer Helpers	BCI/KCI guidance	9-12 KCI and BCI	Need to include grade 7 & 8 and be more consistent divisionally
Advisory Groups	High school staff	9-12 KCI and BCI	See next page, must revisit role and purpose of Teacher Advisor

Whole School Behaviour (PBIS)	K-12, All Schools should have matrix		
Four Pillars	K-12 Staff, Boiss	K-12 students	
Health Curriculum Outcomes	All staff, all schools,	All students	Must ensure curricular outcomes are being adhered to, identify who: classroom teacher, phys. Ed., guidance, or combination
2nd Step Program	K-4, Mayfair, Boissevain, Killarney		
Student Government		Killarney 5-8 and 9-12 Boissevain 5-8 and 9-12 Minto 4-8	
RTI Behaviour Intervention Team	RTI Intervention Team, all schools –flex groups		
Roots of Empathy	Grade 4	Great program but depends on availabilty	
Life Skills Training	Boiss. Guidance, Grade 3 & 4		
Reading Buddies	Minto K-8, Boiss K-6, Killarney K-8		
Lion's Quest	Not being used consistently, kits are in schools with lessons, staff draw from these as needed		Ensure all staff (including new) are aware this resource is in the schools
Developmental Assets	Killarney K-12 Staff		
MTYP Presentations		K-6 Boissevain, Killarney, and Minto	
Mind Up			Currently exploring, includes lessons K-8 for positive behaviour/relationships and building resiliency

Where are the Gaps/What is the Action Required?

When discussing areas which needed attention, and what can be done to improve, the following were identified:

Area Needing to be Addressed	Required Action
-Support for new students	-Formalize buddy system for new students, ensure they have an adult to go to and who will regularly check in with the student
-Not all staff as comfortable with the role of Teacher Advisor, or lack of common understanding of what role includes -A high percentage of students reporting they do not have an advocate at school	-Allocate time within future school based PD days to revisit the advisor model, to promote a common understanding and ensuring staff are comfortable with the role
-Social cliques amongst students, often related to sports teams	-Encourage all students to participate in activities outside the classroom, and ensure something for everyone (beyond sports)
-Mental health stigma, and needing to provide supports/coping skills for students who are struggling with mental health	-Focus on PD for staff to work effectively with students who have mental health challenges, and raise awareness amongst student body
-Perceived lack of diversity within schools	-Ensure opportunities occur regularly within classrooms and within curricular outcomes to provide cultural diversity programming
-Pressure for staff to get through curriculum -Targeted programming to promote virtues not consistent on a school wide basis -Many programs occur starting in later middle years, need to start earlier -More attention/work needed with students who struggle to fit in socially or who peers consider to be "different" -Need to curb students from focusing on "gossip" via social media	-Work with staff (again perhaps during school based PD days) to develop units at designated grade levels starting in the primary years. -These would focus on promoting the virtues of empathy, compassion, acceptance, resiliency, and woven into curriculum (not separate from it) Need programming which is truly school wide and continuous, not hit and miss. -Needs to involve all staff, not just admin and guidance. -can include field trips which emphasize virtues (such as soup kitchen)
-Students becoming increasingly ineffective in working through conflicts, talking to one another, instead will attack back and forth via social media	-Guidance develop specific groups (girls support group for example) to promote healthy communication -Must ensure students have a same gender person to speak to at the school, whether teacher advisor, guidance counselor, or other
-Must promote "whole community" approach to address bullying/cyber-bullying	-share information and resources regularly with parents/public through newsletters, website, PT interviews, parent evenings

Safe and Caring Schools Resources

The following resources are being highlighted as potentially being very useful for schools seeking to use external sources for safe schools programming. It should be noted that the *Respect in School* program is being recommended for implementation division-wide, while the implementation of other programs listed would be a school-based decision.

Respect in School

Respect in School is about a 2.5 hour, interactive online training program delivered in a simple point and click format and provides all school leaders with access to information in a convenient, non-threatening environment....their own home!

Respect in School is Canada's only online bullying, abuse, harassment and neglect prevention program for all school-based leaders. This program is ideal for any adult or student leader in a position of power and trust over other students and has been crafted to be completed by all school personnel including;

- *Teachers*
- *Administrators*
- *Counselors*
- *Custodians*
- *School Bus Drivers*
- *Parent Volunteers*
- *Any school leader who may interact with students*

With this powerful, online training, *Respect in School* provides essential abuse prevention education to all paid and volunteer personnel in an education based environment.

http://www.respectinschool.com/

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

The *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program* is designed to improve peer relations and make schools safer, more positive places for students to learn and develop. Goals of the program include:

- Reducing existing bullying problems among students
- Preventing new bullying problems
- Achieving better peer relations at school

The *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program* is designed and researched for students in elementary, middle, and junior high schools. Many schools have included Kindergarten-Grade

2 in their Olweus programs. Some high schools have also used the program to address bullying behavior.

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program has four levels:
- School-Level components
- Classroom-Level components
- Individual–Level components
- Community-Level components

http://www.olweus.org/public/bullying_prevention_program.page

MindUp

MindUP™ is the evidenced based, CASEL accredited social and emotional literacy program of The Hawn Foundation built upon neuroscience, positive psychology, mindful awareness training and optimism. With an implementation model designed for sustainable success that includes a five point plan, the MindUP™ tools and strategies increase focus, improve academics and create happiness and resiliency in children throughout six countries and growing every day.

http://thehawnfoundation.org/mindup/

Reconnecting Youth
The RY program goals:
- Increased school performance
- Decreased drug involvement
- Decreased emotional distress

The RY curriculum
There are 75 lessons in the RY curriculum. It is typically offered as a semester-long, for-credit class by a teacher/facilitator who works well with youth at risk and who is trained to implement the RY program.

1. Getting Started
2. Self-esteem Enhancement
3. Decision Making
4. Personal Control
5. Interpersonal Communication

RY Students:
An RY Class is made up of 10 – 12 students who are INVITED to participate and who meet the following criteria:

- behind in credits for their grade level and
- in the top 25th percentile for absences and
- a GPA of less than 2.3 or a precipitous drop in grades, or
- a prior dropout status, or
- are referred by school personnel & meet 1 or more of the first three criteria

RY is an evidenced-based program:
When tested with potential high school dropouts, RY had significant effects:
- 35% reduction in dropout rates
- 50% reduction in hard drug use
- 75% reduction in depression/hopelessness
- 80% reduction in suicidal behaviors
- 18% *increase* in GPA for all classes (excluding RY)
- 7.5% *increase* in credits earned per semester

Training
The program can be delivered without training; however, training is highly recommended. A four day training program for 8 RY Leaders costs $8,000. RY kit costs $299 and there are consumable workbooks @ approximately $25.00 per book.

http://www.reconnectingyouth.com/programs/reconnecting-youth/

Strong Kids

The Strong Kids programs are brief and practical social-emotional learning curricula that were designed for the purpose of teaching social and emotional skills, promoting resilience, strengthening assets, and increasing coping skills of children and early adolescents. There are four versions:

- Strong Start Grades K-2
- Strong Kids Grades 3-5
- Strong Kids Grades 6-8
- Strong Teens Grades 9-12

These programs are aimed at both prevention and early intervention, and have a wide range of applications. Strong Kids may be used effectively with high functioning, typical, at-risk, or emotionally-behaviorally disordered students in a variety of settings.

The Strong Start program is a literacy based program. The Strong Kids program for grades 3-5 and 6-8, have a similar curriculum structure. Both include 12 lessons, which take approximately 45 to 55 minutes each, and may be conducted by a teacher or mental health professional such as a counselor or psychologist. Students find these lessons to be engaging and fun, and they

benefit from the integrated behavioral, affective, and cognitive approach that is taken to introduce and master key concepts.

Strong Teens program for grades 9-12, includes 12 lessons, which take approximately 45 to 55 minutes each.

http://strongkids.uoregon.edu/strongkids.html

Other programs:

Friends for Life   http://www.friendsinfo.net/ca.htm

WITS program   http://www.witsprogram.ca/

Lions Quest   http://www.lionsquest.ca/

Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports   http://www.pbis.org/

Other Sites:

Stop a Bully   http://www.stopabully.ca/

Kids Help Phone   http://www.kidshelpphone.ca/teens/home/splash.aspx

Safe Schools Manitoba   http://www.safeschoolsmanitoba.ca/

Kids in the Know   http://www.kidsintheknow.ca/app/en/

Bullying.org   http://www.bullying.org/

Media Awareness   http://media-awareness.ca/english/index.cfm

Legislation/Support Documents from Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning:

http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/safe_schools/index.html

http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/safe_schools/initiatives.html

http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/safe_schools/charter.html

Definitions

As adapted from the Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning <u>Provincial Code of Conduct</u> as well as the Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning <u>Respect for Human Diversity Policies Support Document</u>

Bullying: Bullying is behaviour that is intended to cause, or should be known to cause, fear, intimidation, humiliation, distress or other forms of harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, reputation, or property. It is also behaviour that is intended to create, or should be known 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); it may take place through any form of expression, including written, verbal, physical, or any form of electronic communication (referred to as cyberbullying), including social media, text messages, instant messages, websites, or e-mail.

Conflict: This refers to circumstances in which two or more individuals have a disagreement which requires resolution, but involves two or more parties equally (there is no power imbalance). While conflicts should also be addressed by the appropriate classroom teacher, supervisor, or school administrator, it is not to be confused with bullying in which a power imbalance between the parties does exist.

Zero Tolerance: In relation to bullying behaviour, this is at times confused with "zero occurrences." It should be understood that while a school will not tolerate bullying behaviour (zero tolerance) and will work to prevent and intervene when necessary, it does not mean that bullying activity never occurs nor does it mean all instances of bullying result in a student(s) being removed from school. Once occurrences of bullying are reported and investigated, resulting action can vary based on the particular circumstance and other variables such as severity and frequency.

Cyberbullying: Cyberbullying is bullying by means of any form of electronic communication, including social media, text messaging, instant messaging, websites, or e-mail.

Discrimination: is treating a person or group differently, to their disadvantage and without reasonable cause, on the basis of a protected characteristic, such as ancestry, age or disability. Failure to reasonably accommodate a special need that is based on a protected characteristic, such as disability or religion, is also discriminatory. Harassment based on a protected characteristic, such as sexual orientation, and sexual harassment is prohibited as well.

Diversity: encompasses all the ways in which human beings are both similar and different. It means understanding and accepting the uniqueness of individuals, as well as respecting their differences. Diversity may include, but is not limited to, gender identity, sexual orientation; age;

ethnic origin; ancestry, culture; socio-economic status; religion; family status; mental and physical disability.

Gender identity refers to a person's internal sense or feeling of being male or female, which may or may not be the same as one's biological sex.

Harassment is any behaviour that degrades, demeans, humiliates, or embarrasses a person, and that a reasonable person should have known would be unwelcome. It includes actions (e.g., touching, pushing), comments (e.g., jokes, name-calling) or displays (e.g., posters, cartoons). Harassment can also take place electronically (e.g., text messages, email or screen savers). The Code refers to harassment as a course of abusive and unwelcome conduct or comment made on the basis of any protected characteristic.

Prejudice is a preconceived negative opinion and/or hostile belief about an individual or group formed beforehand or without knowledge often on the basis of stereotypes.

Sexual orientation is the term used to describe an individual's sexual, psychological and emotional feelings of attraction towards another person.

Stereotypes are a simplified or fixed belief (often exaggerated) that people have about what members of a group are like, without allowing for individual differences.