

Safe and Caring Schools Policy



The Safe and Caring Schools Policy, Working Copy, details the policy for the elementary federal schools at Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. This policy will be reviewed and updated periodically and as required.

AADNC-AANDC

Six Nations of the Grand
River Territory

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Statement of Policy

It is the policy of the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory elementary federal schools to provide and maintain safe, caring, and inclusive learning environments for all students. Every student should be allowed to reach her/his potential in a safe and respectful environment that is grounded in the traditional, cultural knowledge of the Six Nations Community. This is achieved by supporting positive behaviour in a climate of kindness, respect, welcoming and cooperation. Every member of the school community has a responsibility to help create the school environment that is free from bullying and violence.

Policy Components and Implementation Strategies

The Safe and Caring Schools Policy consists of the following components:

- The ongoing development of a positive school climate as a yearly priority in the School Success Plan.
- Students, staff and parents will be included in the process of creating a positive school climate and safe school environment.
- Positive expectations of students and parents will be clearly outlined in the school's Parent Handbook.
- A Code of Conduct will be developed for the five federal elementary schools at Six Nations of the Grand River Territory to ensure consistency of student standards of behaviour in all schools. Schools may further develop an individual School Code of Conduct.
- A framework of progressive discipline will be developed. It will have a focus on a range of consequences that are developmentally and culturally appropriate and support improving behaviour through positive approaches.
- Schools will strive to eliminate all forms of bullying through the initiation of age appropriate bullying and cyber-bullying prevention and intervention strategies. These strategies will encourage a positive learning and teaching environment resulting in increased academic achievement for all students.
- School and community understanding and support for restorative practices that build positive relationships and repair harm caused by conflicts will be encouraged.
- The Safe and Caring Schools Policy and procedures will be consistently implemented in all federal elementary schools at Six Nations. Staff development will be essential and ongoing throughout the implementation phase of the revised Safe and Caring Schools Policy.
- School staff will respond immediately and effectively to all student and parent concerns regarding bullying and violence issues.
- Accurate records will be kept on all serious student incidents. Statistics on the number and type of serious student incidents will be kept for each school. A summary report will developed looking at all five federal elementary schools.

- Each school will ensure that safe schools arrival and school security procedures are in place.
- Prevention strategies will be developed in relation to lateral violence.

The Safe and Caring Schools Policy is divided into seven sections:

1. Creating a Positive School Climate
2. Code of Conduct
3. Progressive Discipline
4. Bullying and Cyber-Bullying Prevention
5. Restorative Practice
6. Safe and Caring School Teams
7. Safe Schools Arrival and School Security Procedures

1. Creating a Positive School Climate

Students will succeed when they are in an environment where they feel safe and supported. There is a positive link between students' success and the school environment. A positive school climate and atmosphere exists when all students feel safe, comfortable, valued, respected, and accepted in an environment where they can interact with caring people they trust.

Elements contributing to a positive climate include:

- Student voice
- Learning environment
- Community partnerships
- Parent engagement
- Physical environment
- Social emotional environment

(Source: Ministry of Education, Ontario)

Six Nations of the Grand River Territory elementary federal schools provide a physical environment that is safe and inviting for all students, as well as the local community to enter and use. This is accomplished by promoting traditional knowledge that is grounded in the cultural and historical values of our community, while maintaining a balance of western academic excellence. By incorporating traditional concepts such as:

(The following is a list of Haudenosaunee specific behaviors, which reflect some of the Traditional Cultural Values of the Six Nations Community)

Mohawk Language	Cayuga Language	English
Kawennaná:wens	Awę̃ñhaó ⁷ dę:	Soft/Caring words
Onkwehonwe ⁷ néha	Q̃gweh̃wéneha:	Use of Native language
Ka ⁷ nikonhrí:yo	Ga ⁷ nig̃hí:yo	Good mind; meaning being thoughtful, respectful of others
Kanoronhkwa:tshera	Gañq:kwa ⁷ hsra ⁷	Kindness, caring and love for one another.
Karihwí:yo	Gaihwí:yo:	Good words; fair mindedness
Ka ⁷ shatsténhsera	Gashásdęhsra ⁷	Strength; in unity, working cooperatively in a clan/group
Skén:nen	Sgę:nq ⁷	Peacefulness; working towards a nonviolent environment
Atennitéhtshera	Adęnidęqhsra ⁷	Compassion; humanitarianism and promotion of human welfare
Kariwakwarishyóntshera	Odrihwagwáihsyq:	Truthfulness
Tósha teiontatkaré:wahte	Ahgwíh deyqdatnq̃hny ⁷ k	Do not hurt one another; do not bully
Tsá:ta niyoweyonhkará:keh	Ja:dahk niyoweyohgá:geh	7 spans, thickness of skin; even-tempered



These above concepts are contained in the following symbols. The Five Nations confederation Belt, the Friendship belt and the three sisters wampum.

A positive school climate can be achieved by allowing students to understand and appreciate their cultural heritage, thereby developing their unique Ogwehó:weh identity. This can be realized by actions such as: maintaining multiple avenues for Elders to interact formally and informally with students; using a broad range of culturally appropriate performance standards to assess student knowledge and skills; encouraging and supporting experientially oriented approaches to education, assisting students to develop the capacity to assess their own strengths and weaknesses and make appropriate decisions based on self-assessment.

Another major component of creating a positive, safe school environment is to acquaint all students with the heritage language of the local community; and provide cultural orientation and mentoring program for new teachers to learn about and adjust to the cultural expectations and practices of the community and school.

Character development goes hand in hand with the development of a positive school climate. Character development is the deliberate effort to nurture the cultural and historic values of the community including the values that are common within all schools. It contributes to respectful, safe, caring, and inclusive school environments where students are inspired to achieve to the best of their ability. It also supports student achievement.

Character development will be integrated into the curricular experiences of students and embedded into the culture of the school in an explicit and intentional manner and will be part of the expectations and actions/strategies of the School Success Plan. Creating a positive school climate will be an integral component of the School Success Plan each year.

School Success plans should be shared with parents and reviewed with Home and School committees. In order to assess each school's climate from a student, staff and parent perspective, anonymous school climate surveys will be conducted every two years. Strategies should be put into the School Success plans to improve school climate regarding issues identified in the surveys.

Ongoing Professional Development will be provided to all staff regarding strategies to promote a positive school climate and character development.

2. Code of Conduct

All students, parents, teachers, volunteers, visitors and staff members have a right and responsibility to contribute to a positive school climate. A School Code of Conduct outlines the rights and responsibilities of all school community members and sets out clear standards of behaviour.

The Six Nations of the Grand River Territory elementary federal schools will develop a Code of Conduct that supports the traditions, beliefs and values of the Haudenosaunee people.

This Code of Conduct should outline the expectations of behaviour in positive ways including what behaviour is acceptable and clarify the roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community. Once the District Code of Conduct is written, each school will review it with students, parents and school community members and seek feedback.

Professional development learning opportunities should be provided for staff to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to promote student success in a safe learning and teaching environment.

3. Progressive Discipline

Bullying will not be accepted on school property, at school-related activities or on school buses. Bullying will not be accepted in any other circumstances (e.g. online) where engaging in bullying will have a negative impact on the positive climate of the school. Progressive discipline is an approach that should make use of a continuum of prevention programs, interventions, supports, and consequences that build upon skills for healthy relationships and promote positive behaviours.

Schools will develop and implement a school-wide progressive discipline plan. Training plans will be developed for all school staff on progressive discipline. Interventions, supports and consequences should be developmentally and socio-emotionally appropriate and include learning opportunities for reinforcing positive behaviour while helping students make better choices.

All inappropriate student behaviour, including bullying must be addressed. School staff must respond to any student behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate. Thorough communication with staff and parents of the student who has been harmed and with a student who has engaged in serious student incidents must take place. All serious student incidents must be reported to the Principal as soon as is reasonably possible but no later than the end of the school day. A written report must be completed as well. (Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form). District suspension and expulsion procedures should be reviewed and updated. Protocols should be established with community agencies to help respond to and meet the needs of the students.

4. Bullying and Cyber-Bullying Prevention

Bullying prevention is identified as a high priority in every Six Nations of the Grand River Territory elementary federal schools. A positive school climate is essential in the prevention of bullying behaviour. Bullying prevention is about, and for students.

What is bullying?

“Bullying” means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a pupil where,

(a) the behaviour is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behaviour would be likely to have the effect of,

- (i) causing harm, fear or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social or academic harm, harm to the individual's reputation or harm to the individual's property, or
- (ii) creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, and

(b) the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the pupil and the individual based on factors such as size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, disability or the receipt of special education;

Bullying

For the purposes of the definition of "bullying" in subsection (1), behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

Cyber-Bullying

For the purposes of the definition of "bullying" in subsection (1), bullying includes bullying by electronic means (commonly known as cyber-bullying), including,

- (a) creating a web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
- (b) impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet; and
- (c) communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.

(Bill 13, Accepting Schools Act—2012)

Bullying can take many forms. It can be:

physical – hitting, shoving, damaging or stealing property

verbal – name calling, mocking, or making sexist, racist or homophobic comments

social – excluding others from a group or spreading gossip or rumours about them

written – writing notes or signs that are hurtful or insulting

electronic (commonly known as cyber-bullying) – spreading rumours and hurtful comments through the use of e-mail, cell phones (e.g., text messaging) and on social media sites.

Bullying: We Can All Help Stop It

What is Electronic Bullying or Cyber-Bullying?

It is electronic communication that is used to upset, threaten or embarrass another person. The use of e-mail, cell phones, text messages and social media sites to threaten, harass, embarrass, socially exclude or damage reputations and friendships.

It can include put downs, insults and can also involve spreading rumours, sharing private information, photos or videos or threatening to harm someone. It is always aggressive and hurtful.

In the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory elementary federal schools, principals are required to address cyber-bullying if it has an impact on the school climate.

Definition of cyber-bullying from, *Bullying: We Can All Help Stop It*, A Guide for Parents
Ontario Ministry of Education

Research has shown that bullying prevention programs have the following components:

- Education to develop a deeper awareness and understanding of bullying in order to foster meaningful prevention programs;
- Assessment to determine the extent and nature of bullying in the Six Nations of the Grand River elementary federal schools, perceptions around bullying issues, and the effectiveness of bullying prevention strategies and resources;
- Action to provide appropriate identification and prevention strategies for the whole school community and specific interventions that address:
 - School-wide education as part of the daily classroom programs for all students;
 - routine interventions specific to students involved in early stages of bullying;
 - intensive intervention strategies for those students who are involved in repeated bullying with possible referral to community/social service agencies.

Shaping Safer Schools: A bullying Prevention Action Plan, Safe Schools Action Team, Ontario 2005

Each school's bullying prevention plan will be incorporated into the School Success Plan and should include professional development for staff and evaluated for effectiveness yearly. It is important to include the whole school community in the development of the plan.

Parents as well play an important role in the prevention of bullying. Parents at the school level will receive yearly training on recognizing warning signs that their child might be being bullied or is involved in bullying situations.

All Parents will receive a copy of *Bullying We Can All Help Stop It, A Guide for Parents of Elementary and Secondary School Parents* By the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Opportunities should be provided for school bus drivers, supply teachers and teacher assistants, volunteers and others who help out in the schools to be aware and trained regarding bullying prevention and intervention strategies. Bullying prevention programs and resources should be evaluated before their use to determine if they meet with identified bullying prevention needs of the schools.

5. Restorative Practices

Restorative Practices is a positive alternative to more common types of disciplinary measures in schools. It is used to build a sense of school community and resolve conflict by repairing harm and restoring positive relationships. It begins with the belief that when harm has been committed, there are three groups whose needs must be meaningfully met:

- Those who have been harmed
- Those who caused harm
- The school or community

Through restorative practices, schools build on existing practices that already work. It is designed to take an integrated and proactive approach to maintaining safe schools. Restorative practices shifts the emphasis from managing behaviour to focusing on building, nurturing and repairing relationships. In this approach, the offenders take responsibility for the harm they have caused others and take steps to make it right. Principals, Vice Principals, key school staff and community members will be trained on Restorative Practices in order to further expand their knowledge and skills regarding this practice in a school setting. Restorative practices will be implemented as part of the positive school climate initiatives in each of the elementary schools.

6. Safe and Caring School Teams

Each school will have in place a safe and caring school team. The responsibility of this team is to foster a safe, inclusive, and accepting school climate. Safe and Caring School Teams are a key component to creating a positive school climate because they bring together members of the school community as a team. The membership of this team must include at least one student, one parent, one teacher, one non-teaching staff member, one community partner, and the Principal. The chair of this team is a staff member.

As each school is unique, the Safe and Caring School Team provides an opportunity to address issues and help achieve a positive school climate through the cooperative efforts of staff, students, parents and community members. The Safe and Caring School Team can provide bullying prevention strategies that are relevant to the culture of the school.

It is expected that the progress of the Safe and Caring School Team will be reported to the staff and school community members on a regular basis.

7. Safe Schools Arrival and School Security Procedures

The safety and security of all elementary students in the Six Nations of the Grand River territory elementary federal schools are of utmost importance. Each school will continue to implement and review safe school arrival procedures for the students.

Each school will establish procedures to ensure that all students are accounted for each day and that a reliable documenting system is in place to track all students whether in attendance or absent on a given day.

Parents and guardians are responsible for their child's safety. It is their responsibility to contact their child's school to report absences and lateness in a timely manner. The school will always make necessary contacts to the parent when unexplained absences or lateness occur. A log of actions taken by school staff will be kept.

These procedures will be outlined in the parent handbook and be reviewed by staff and the Home and School committee each year.

Schools will inform and remind parents in the parent handbook and monthly newsletters regarding the policy related to students and inclement weather and emergency school closure procedures.

The school security procedures are outlined in school policy S002 Lock Down. This policy should be reviewed and revised as needed and regular practices must take place throughout the school year.

References

- Public Safety Canada-Bullying Prevention
- Public Health Agency Of Canada
- Canadian Heritage
- Michelle Bomberry: Community Services Coordinator, Six Nations Police
- Tom Deer: Culture and Language Teacher: Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, federal elementary schools
- Heather Pais, Principal, Antler River School: Chippewas of the Thames
- Jo Ann Henry, Education Officer, Aboriginal Office: Ministry of Education
- Leslee White-eye: Education Officer, Ministry of Education, Ontario
- Part XIII of the Education Act
- Accepting Schools Act, 2012 (Bill 13)
- The Education Amendment Act: Keeping Our Kids Safe At School (2009)

- Policy/Program Memorandum 144(2012) Bullying Prevention and Intervention
- Policy/Program Memorandum 145 (2012) Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour
- Policy/Program Memorandum 128 The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct (2007)
- Safe Schools: Creating a Positive School Climate
- Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario: Supporting Students with Special Education Needs Through Progressive Discipline K-12
- Ontario College of Teachers Standards of Teaching Practice
- Professional Advisory: Safety in Learning Environments, A Shared Responsibility, Ontario College of Teachers (2013)
- Values and Ethics Code for the Public Service
- Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12
- Shaping Safer Schools: A Bullying Action Plan, Safe School Action Team (2005)

Administrative Procedures

1. Creating a Positive School Climate (completed)
2. Junior/ intermediate School Climate Survey (completed)
3. Six Nations District Code of Conduct (to be written)
4. Schools' Code of Conduct (to be written)
5. Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour (completed)
6. Bullying Prevention and Intervention (to be written)
7. Restorative Practices (to be written)
8. Lock Down Policy (to be revised)
9. School Police Protocol (to be written)