

questions & answers

Independent Bullying Review – Oct. 16, 2019

General Questions about Bullying

1 | What is bullying?

The *Education Act*, and all Alberta school boards, including the CBE, define bullying as repeated and hostile or demeaning behavior by an individual in the school community where the behavior is intended to cause harm, fear or distress to one or more other individuals in the school community, including psychological harm or harm to an individual's reputation. Bullying is not a normal part of growing up and does not build character.

2 | Is every instance of hurtful or bad behavior bullying?

No, but it is very important that *any* hurtful or bad behavior be addressed, and never ignored. For example, a conflict that occurs between two students in the heat of the moment is not bullying, but needs to be addressed.

3 | What can students, parents and communities do to prevent/address bullying?

This is a societal issue on which we all have to work together. Parents can help by listening to children, being a positive role model, setting consequences for unacceptable behavior, and by getting involved in their school's bullying prevention initiatives. If they are concerned about their child, they should start with their child's teacher. If parents are not satisfied with the outcome, the CBE has a concerns and complaints process that is clearly outlined on our website.

Students can and should also be part of the solution. If student see others being bullied, they should tell an adult. If they are being bullied themselves, they should tell an adult they trust, and keep telling them until they get help.

The CBE works with multiple community partners build positive relationships, create safe communities and prepare for the challenges of a complex, changing world.

4 | What is the CBE doing now to address bullying?

This year, every one of our schools has been asked to include a well-being for learning goal in their School Development Plan, and many participate in programs and activities that are aimed at developing resilience and preventing bullying. Addressing behavioral issues in the classroom is part of our work every day. Beyond academic success, we work to build character, citizenship and personal development. We also work with students, parents, staff and communities because we all play a part in preventing and addressing instances of bullying behavior.



5 | How are bullies dealt with now?

Bullying behavior is never tolerated, but the response to it can vary widely depending on the circumstances. The CBE has a student code of conduct and a progressive student discipline policy in place. Progressive student discipline means a whole school approach that uses a variety of intervention, supports and consequences to address inappropriate and unacceptable student behavior. The policy promotes positive behaviors that contribute to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment.

Questions about the Independent Bullying Review

1 | What were the main findings in the review?

The reviewer found that bullying, as defined by the *Education Act*, is rare in CBE schools. But Dr. Donlevy also identified that we do have some work to do, especially around supporting our students, parents and staff in continuing to build a common understanding of bullying and other hurtful behaviors and how to address them consistently.

2 | Why was the review internal only?

The primary focus of the review was to measure the effectiveness of the CBE's policy framework and practices to address bullying in CBE schools. We therefore started with CBE staff including teachers, administrators and central office staff.

3 | When and how will you engage with students, parents and other stakeholders on bullying in the CBE?

Over the next year, we will have conversations with students, parents, staff and other stakeholders about how we can improve. This, together with the recommendations from Dr. Donlevy, will inform our plan going forward.

4 | How will clarifying policies or creating common understandings reduce bullying?

The purpose of the review was to measure the effectiveness of the CBE's policy framework and practices to address bullying in CBE schools. Creating common understanding is just one piece of a very complex approach to preventing and addressing bullying. Bullying is a societal issue and it requires our collective understanding and support.

5 | Are you going to act on all of the recommendations?

We are currently studying the report and its recommendations. We will continue to have conversations with our staff, students and parents to understand the best way forward. In the meantime, we are doing everything we can to ensure that our students are in welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments.

6 | Do all schools have access to bullying awareness programs?

Schools make decisions about what is in the best interests of their students. These decisions are made based on each unique school community. We also have multiple community partnerships and individual school-based programs that are designed to promote welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments.



7 | What will training look like for teachers?

We have just received the report, so it will take time to plan for next steps. We do have an annual professional learning schedule for teachers and we will look at how to incorporate some of the recommendations into that schedule.

8. Are you working with partners and community groups to address bullying issues?

Yes, and it is our plan to continue to have conversations with students, teachers, parents and communities to understand what we can do better, together. Bullying is a societal issue that impacts all of us.

Well-Being and Mental Health Supports

1 | What are schools doing to support and promote student well-being?

Supporting and promoting student well-being happens daily in our schools. This year, all schools have also been asked to identify a well-being goal in their school development plans. Well-being encompasses students' social/emotional, physical and mental well being.

2 | What mental health resources are available to help students suffering from bullying, or students who are exhibiting bullying behavior?

The CBE wants all students to be successful in their learning, and we recognize that positive mental health enables students to fully participate in their learning. When teachers identify students who appear to be struggling with mental health and well-being, we work with our system resources and community partners to provide supports for students and their families. Supporting student mental health and well-being takes a village: students, families, Alberta Health Services, community supports and school staff all play a role.

Resources

Key information and resources for students, staff, parents, families and communities are posted on our website:

[Bullying Prevention](#)

[Positive Mental Health](#)

[AR 6031](#) – Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning and Work Environments

[AR 6005](#) – Student Code of Conduct

[AR 5007](#) – Concerns and Complaints

[AR 6006](#) – Progressive Student Discipline

[AR 6007](#) – Suspension and Expulsion

[AR 3010](#) – Student Suicide Intervention



