

Purpose:

West Gate is committed to creating an environment where students feel safe and welcomed. This plan is a crucial step towards achieving this goal. By working together, we can strive to prevent bullying and ensure that our students thrive and succeed in school.

Bullying can severely impact a child's mental health and academic performance. By implementing a comprehensive prevention and intervention plan, we can support students in participating in a safe and positive learning environment, thereby improving attendance and overall performance in school.

As stipulated in the Education Act, subsection 303.3(3), every school must implement the Board's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. To comply with this Ministry policy, each school will create and implement a plan tailored to meet the unique needs of their students and the greater school community. West Gate recognizes the importance of working together as a school community to develop a positive school climate that supports student achievement and well-being.

Teachers and ESS are critical agents of social change in bullying programs. They play an essential role in creating a respectful classroom, managing their classrooms effectively, promoting communication about bullying, and responding supportively to the children involved in bullying.

Factors Affecting School Climate:

West Gate recognizes various factors that contribute to a safe, caring, and inclusive school climate, which is essential for creating a positive learning environment for all students. To create an inclusive environment, we have committed to the following:

- Use of EDSBY – our 'Announcements' group for guardians, students, and staff
- Spirit Days to promote inclusion
- Monthly assemblies to promote community and celebrate school events
- Breakfast/snack program
- Sports teams and clubs
- Availability and visibility of our staff throughout the school day
- Birthday recognition via announcements for students

Promoting respect and understanding among students who are different from ourselves is key. West Gate fosters this through:

- Use of morning announcements to recognize students/staff in February to promote Kindness

- ‘Days of Acknowledgement’ shared with staff for lesson planning and students on morning announcements
- Ongoing diversity training for staff
- Recognition of Treaties Week and Every Child Matters
- Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week
- Black History Month recognition
- Recognition of various cultural celebrations through front hallway displays and tours
- Continued focus on our motto: “Welcome to the Wolf Pack Where Everyone Belongs”
- Role of the UPSTANDER: Presentations by Mr. Raycroft and Mrs. Skene to students in grades 5-8 about being upstanders rather than bystanders in the ‘Words Matter’ presentation
- Pink Shirt Day (February 26, 2025) – Encouraging everyone in the West Gate community to wear pink shirts to stand against bullying
- Applied for Bullying Prevention and Awareness Grant with the intention to purchase subject specific/mentor texts to add to the school library and highlight throughout the building

Promoting positive behavior and addressing negative behavior through a focus on well-being is widely practiced at West Gate. This includes understanding that our interactions with others depend on how we manage our own mindfulness and well-being. This is visible through:

- School-wide focus on ‘Mindfulness’ – connected to the social/emotional aspect of student success to increase resiliency and focus while raising awareness of positive mental health. We incorporate ‘Mindful Monday’ moments where the entire school engages in a mindful moment together, hoping students continue to use these strategies in their self-help and regulation skills.
- School-wide focus on Wellness – sharing ‘Wellness Wednesday’ tips that help students take care of their physical and mental well-being. These tips are shared every Wednesday on announcements.
- Incorporating ‘Fitness Fridays’ into our school-wide routines to build community while focusing on the importance of fitness for overall health and well-being.

Student Awareness:

Student awareness of how they can prevent, address, and report bullying begins with education and the various training programs provided to students both explicitly as anti-bullying programs but also, inherently in our school initiatives surrounding mindfulness, mental health, kindness, and

inclusion. Students are made aware of how to recognize signs of bullying and to speak up when they witness these types of behaviours. It is our expectation that at West Gate Public School, we proactively try to prevent bullying and pledge to deal with incidences of bullying when they occur. Bullying is defined as a form of repeated, persistent, aggressive behaviour that is directed at an individual(s) that is intended to cause (or should be known to cause) fear, distress, and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem or reputation (Ministry of Education). Guardians who are made aware of such behaviour should encourage their child to tell an adult or to call the school personally.

There are two types of bullying – direct and indirect. Examples include Direct: Physical: hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting, etc., Verbal: taunting, teasing, degrading racial or sexual comments, etc., Non-verbal: threatening, obscene gestures, etc. Indirect: Physical: getting another person to assault someone, Verbal: spreading rumours about others, Non-verbal: deliberate exclusion from a group or activity, cyber-bullying, etc. Please note that all Human Rights violations will be treated seriously and will provide opportunities for further learning.

To eliminate bullying, students, staff, administration and parents all need to take a role. Therefore, at West Gate, we will adhere to the following responsibilities: We will not bully others. We will demonstrate kindness and respect towards others. We will help students who are bullied in a supportive manner by using our words and/or reporting what we see to an adult. We will include everyone in games and activities. We will tell an adult at school and an adult at home if issues occur.

Students who do not follow these rules will be subject to consequences via Progressive Discipline.

Parent/Guardian Engagement:

We are fortunate to have strong family connections and support at West Gate. Families are truly our partners in their child(ren)'s education and support the learning and initiatives that occur at school. Our staff invites families in to participate in class activities such as STEM activities, reading, sharing of cultures and activities such as cooking, community building, etc. During whole school events we welcome parent volunteers who help the event to run smoothly.

We try to engage with parents multiple times a year and attempt to invite in community partners to events such as our Meet the Staff, Kindergarten Open House, and Welcome to Kindergarten in order to promote a broader community connections. These events help our families to become knowledgeable about community partners and resources in the school and in the broader community. They reinforce that we are a family at West Gate and that we all have the responsibility to work together to support our students.

Initiated Programs:

The following is a representation of Board-approved programs that are already being implemented at West Gate:

- *Zones of Regulation*: Zones of Regulation are visible throughout West Gate. Our Self Regulation room speaks directly to a space that has been created for our students to self situate in order to participate in school activities and learning requirements.
- *Socio-Emotional Learning Kits*: Teachers use these kits and accompanying lessons in their classroom instruction.
- *Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training*: Staff trained in ASIST to provide needed support for students, as necessary.

Roles and Responsibilities

Students:

- We will not bully others
- We will demonstrate kindness and respect towards others
- We will help students who are bullied in a supportive manner by using our words and/or reporting what we see to an adult
- We will include everyone in games and activities
- We will tell an adult at school and an adult at home

Staff:

According to AP-AD-45, the GECDSB's administrative procedure concerning "Bully Prevention and Intervention", the role of teachers and other staff members include: "As role models, teachers and school staff uphold these high standards when they:

- help students work to their full potential and develop their sense of self-worth
- empower students to be positive leaders in their classroom, school, and community
- communicate regularly and meaningfully with parent(s)/guardian(s)
- maintain consistent standards of behaviours for all students
- demonstrate respect for all students, staff, parent(s)/guardian(s), volunteers, and the members of the school community
- prepare students for the full responsibility of citizenship
- provide representation to the Safe Schools team.

Teachers shall also assist principals in maintaining close co-operation with the school community and in establishing and maintaining consistent disciplinary practices in the school and in classrooms. In addition, teachers must assist principals by reporting incidents of bullying and assisting the principal in conducting an investigation (2017)."

Parents/Guardians:

Parents/Guardians are asked to work in collaboration with the school, staff members, and students by also playing a role in the prevention and intervention of bullying. AP-AD-45 (2017) states that parents/guardians fulfill their role by:

- “showing an active interest in their child’s schoolwork and progress
- communicating regularly with the school
- being familiar with the Board’s Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and school code of conduct, including school rules
- encouraging and assisting their child in following the rules of behaviour
- assisting school staff in dealing with disciplinary issues involving their child; and
- providing representation to the safe schools’ team. (2017)”

Community Members:

In outlining ways in which the greater West Gate community can be involved and accountable in supporting the student body, AP-AD-45 states that all school administrators and staff who have frequent contact with students should receive training programs on how to prevent and intervene in bullying. These programs will cover “cultural sensitivity, respect for diversity, and special education needs” (2017) of students. To ensure that everyone in the school community is aware of their roles and responsibilities, the policy will be made available and actively communicated by the administration to students, parents, staff, school council, and volunteers.