



Bill 13: *Accepting Schools Act*

Information for Parents



Timeline

- December 2011: Bill 13 is introduced
- September 1, 2012: Bill 13 comes into effect
- December 2012: Revised Policy/Program Memoranda on Bullying Prevention & Intervention, Ontario Code of Conduct, and Progressive Discipline are released
- February 1, 2013: Full implementation of Bill 13

Bill 13 & Other Policy Statements

Bill 13 Accepting Schools Act and other
policy statements:

[Accepting Schools Act](#)

[PPM 144 Bullying Prevention & Intervention](#)

[PPM 145: Progressive Discipline & Promoting Positive
Student Behaviour](#)

Purposes of & Context for Bill 13

- The main purposes are to strengthen equity and inclusive education principles, bullying prevention and intervention strategies, and progressive discipline strategies
- Bill 13 and the other policy changes are parts of the Ministry of Education's Comprehensive Action Plan for Accepting Schools

Underlying Beliefs of Bill 13

- A safe, caring, and positive school climate is essential for student achievement and well-being
- Evidence-informed solutions, rooted in prevention and early interventions directed at the individual, classroom, school, and board level are needed to build a positive school climate
- A whole school approach which engages students, school staff, parents, and the community is needed
- Parents are valued and active partners in their children's education

Summary of New Requirements

1. Board Equity & Inclusive Education policies
2. Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week
3. Definitions of *bullying* and *cyberbullying*
4. Bullying & Bias or Hate-based activities
5. School Climate Surveys

Summary of New Requirements

6. Supports for Students involved in Bullying
7. Reporting on Student Misconduct
8. Notification of Parent
9. Parent Consultation
10. Support for Student Organizations

Summary of New Requirements

11. Third-Party Agreements
12. Suspension and expulsion reporting to the Ministry of Education
13. Training and Awareness
14. Provincial Model Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan
15. Progressive Discipline

1. Equity & Inclusive Education

- ▶ Bill 13 directs boards to develop an equity and inclusive education policy
 - ▶ Bill 13 explicitly adds to the *Education Act* a board responsibility to promote “a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all pupils, including pupils of any race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, **gender identity**, **gender expression**, age, marital status, family status or disability.”

2. Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week

- The week beginning on the third Sunday in November in each year is proclaimed as Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week
- The purpose of Bullying Awareness Week is to promote awareness and understanding of bullying and its consequences

Bullying Prevention & Awareness Week in Our Schools



No More Bullies

3. Definition of *Bullying*

- Aggressive, repeated behaviour intended to cause harm, fear, or distress creating a negative environment at a school for another individual
- The behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between a student and the victim



3. Definition of *Cyber-bullying*

Bullying by:

- creating a web page or blog in which the creator assumes another's identity
- impersonating another person as the author of internet content or messages
- communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by others



4. Suspension & Possible Expulsion for Bullying

Bill 13 requires principals to suspend and **consider** recommending expulsion for a student who engages in bullying **if**:

1. the student has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying;
2. the student's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person.

4. Bias or Hate-based Activities

- Principals are also required to **consider** expulsion for a student who engages in any activity listed in *Section 306(1)* of the *Education Act* that is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other similar factor.

5. School Climate Surveys

- Since October 2009, boards have been required to conduct anonymous surveys of students at least once every two years to determine school climate.
- **Bill 13 now mandates that similar surveys be conducted of staff and parents/guardians every two years.**

6. Supports for Students

- Bill 13 requires boards to provide programs, interventions or other supports for students who have been bullied, students who have been affected by bullying, and students who have engaged in bullying.



7. Reporting on Student Misbehaviour

Bill 13 extends the current requirement of staff to report to the principal on serious incidents of student misbehaviour to:

- School psychologists and social workers
- Early childhood educators in extended-day programs

8. Notification of Parents

- When a student is harmed by an incident that can be considered for suspension, the principal will disclose the following:
 - the nature of the activity that resulted in harm
 - the nature of the harm to the student;
 - the steps taken to protect the student's safety, including the nature of any disciplinary measures taken;
 - supports that will be provided for the student.

8. Notification of Parents

- When a student engages in an activity that can be considered for suspension and causes harm to other students, the principal will disclose:
- the nature of the activity that resulted in harm;
- the nature of the harm to any other student;
- the nature of any disciplinary measures taken;
- the supports that will be provided for the student.

9. Parent Consultation

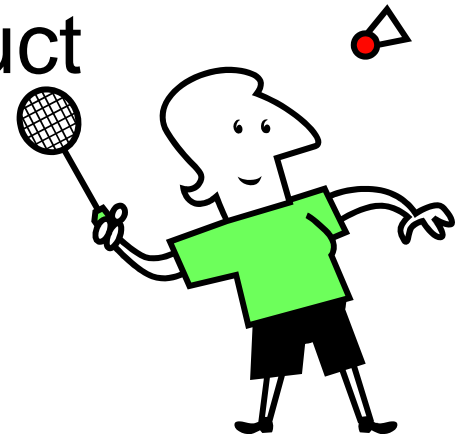
When a principal notifies the parent or guardian of a student who either was harmed by an activity or engaged in a harmful activity that could lead to suspension, the principal will invite the parent or guardian to have a discussion with the principal about the supports that will be provided for his or her child.

10. Student Activities/ Organizations

- Principals are to support students who want to establish activities/organizations that promote a safe, inclusive learning environment, the acceptance of and respect for others and the creation of a positive school climate, including those that promote gender equity, anti-racism, and awareness of and respect for people with disabilities.
- Principals must support activities or organizations that promote the awareness and understanding of, and respect for, people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, including organizations with the name gay-straight alliance or another name.

11. Third Party Agreements

- A board must include in any agreement that it enters into with an individual or organization that wishes to use school facilities a requirement that the person or entity follow standards that are consistent with the Ontario Code of Conduct



12. Suspension & Expulsion Reporting

Every board must submit annual reports on suspensions and expulsions to the Ministry of Education

Data is posted on the Ministry website:

[Ministry of Education Suspension & Expulsion Data](#)

13. Training & Awareness Raising

Boards must provide:

- Annual professional development programs for all staff about bullying prevention, progressive discipline, and strategies for promoting a positive school climate
- Opportunities for all teachers and other staff members to increase their understanding and awareness of inappropriate behaviour and their ability to respond

14. Model Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan

- Features of the new provincial model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan:
- procedures that allow students to report incidents of bullying safely;
- evidence-informed prevention & awareness programs and activities
- evidence-informed intervention strategies that support students who engage in bullying, who have been bullied, and were affected by bullying;

[Draft Model Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan](#)

15. Progressive Discipline Policies

Board and school progressive discipline policies must:

- ▶ identify student behaviours that are inappropriate;
- ▶ provide for appropriate consequences for students who engage in inappropriate behaviour;
- ▶ provide prevention and intervention strategies;
- ▶ provide for progressively more serious consequences for repeated or more serious inappropriate behaviour;
- ▶ provide support for students who are impacted by inappropriate behaviour, and for students who engage in inappropriate behaviour;
- ▶ identify a process that parents can follow if they have concerns about the support provided to their child;

For More Information

- Ministry of Education's Bill 13 Fact Sheet:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/SafeAccepSchools.pdf>

