

Policy Name	Policy on Safe and Caring Schools and Centres
Reference Number	P035
Adoption	Adopted 2007-07-03 by Resolution ETSB 07-07-79
Historical Amendments	Amended 2026-06-23 by Resolution ETSB 26-06-72
Next review date	2031-06-23
Related documents	N/A
Authority	Director of Complementary Educational Services

1. Purpose

1.1. Purpose Statement

The Eastern Townships School Board (the “ETSB”) believes that all students have the right to a safe, caring and inclusive environment that supports well-being and academic success. A positive school climate, characterized by respect, belonging and peaceful interactions, is fundamental to learning and student development.

Creating and sustaining such an environment requires a shared commitment among school/centre teams, families and community partners. Together, they work to prevent, identify and address bullying, violence and discrimination.

The School Board’s lens, grounded in the developmental approach, emphasizes prevention, equity and timely support, aiming to promote safety, well-being and positive outcomes for all.

1.2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students in the Youth, Adult and Vocational sectors during all ETSB activities, including transportation, extra-curricular activities and field trips.
- All adults interacting with students, including staff, volunteers and service providers, in accordance with the Education Act (“EA”), which mandates the obligation of school/centre personnel to ensure student safety and well-being (ss. 75.3,76, 96.12, 83.1).

2. Policy Content

2.1. Proactive and Preventative Education

Each school/centre will develop, implement and sustain a proactive plan to foster a safe, respectful and inclusive learning environment (EA, ss. 75.1, 75.2, 75.3,76, 96.12).

The plan must be communicated to the entire school/centre community, including students, staff and parents/guardians.

2.2. Addressing Violations of Student Safety

Schools/centres must establish clear, consistent protocols for addressing incidents causing physical or psychological harm.

Examples of acts of harm include:

- physical aggression
- verbal harassment or intimidation
- social/emotional exclusion or alienation

Incidents must be assessed in a developmentally appropriate manner, considering the student's age, cognitive abilities and emotional maturity, with the goal of supporting learning and well-being.

Principals/Centre Directors are responsible for ensuring student safety and may implement disciplinary measures in accordance with An Act to Prevent and Stop Bullying and Violence in Schools (Bill 56), and the EA.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
School Board	• Implement and monitor the current Policy across all schools and centres. • Provide training, resources and support to principals/centre directors and staff. • Maintain and annually review board-wide protocols for prevention, reporting, and intervention in bullying and violence. • Establish, communicate and maintain a board-level complaint examination procedure, collaborating with the National Student Ombudsman's office as required.
Governing Board	• Approve and annually review the school/centre's Anti-Bullying and Anti-Violence Plan (EA, s. 75.1). • Approve the school's rules of conduct and safety measures, as proposed by the principal (EA, s. 76).

Principal/Centre Director	The Principal/Centre Director is responsible for ensuring a safe and respectful school/centre. They must: • Establish, promote and monitor prevention, intervention, and support strategies that foster a safe and respectful environment. • Ensure prompt and appropriate intervention in incidents of bullying, violence, intimidation or threats (EA, ss. 75.2 and 76). • Ensure that situations where a student's safety, security or development may be at risk are reported to the Director of Youth Protection (DYP) (Youth Protection Act, ss. 14 and 36). • Collaborate with parents, staff, and relevant community agencies to support student well-being, as outlined in the Education Act.
School and Centre Staff	Staff members are responsible for contributing to a safe and respectful school or centre climate. They must: • Actively support and implement prevention, intervention and support strategies established by the school/centre (EA, s. 75.3). • Intervene promptly and report incidents of bullying, violence, intimidation or threats to the Principal/Centre Director or designated authority (EA, s. 75.1 and Bill 56). • Report any situation in which a student's safety, security or development may be at risk, to the appropriate authorities, in compliance with the Youth Protection Act. • Collaborate with parents, colleagues and community partners, as appropriate, to promote student well-being.
Students	• Students shall conduct themselves in a civil and respectful manner toward their peers and school board personnel (EA, s. 18.1). • Students shall comply with the school's rules of conduct and safety measures approved by the Governing Board (EA, s. 76). • Report incidents of bullying, violence or intimidation to a trusted adult.

Parents/Guardians	• Support the school/centre in maintaining a safe and caring learning environment. • Reinforce respect, safety and positive behaviours. • Collaborate with school/centre personnel to resolve safety, bullying or violence issues.
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4. Review

This policy will be reviewed every five (5) years, or sooner if legislative or ministerial changes impact it.

5. Appendices

5.1. Definitions

- **Bullying:** Any repeated direct or indirect behaviour, comment, act or gesture, whether deliberate or not, including in cyberspace, which occurs in a context where there is a power imbalance between the persons concerned and which causes distress and injures, hurts, oppresses, intimidates or ostracizes (EA, s. 13(1.1)).
- **Violence:** Any intentional demonstration of verbal, written, physical, psychological or sexual force which causes distress and injures, hurts or oppresses a person by attacking their psychological or physical integrity or well-being, or their rights or property (EA, s. 13(3)).
- **Sexual Violence:** Any act involving a sexual component, committed with or without physical contact, including through technological means, toward a student, without their consent or in the presence of a power imbalance. Such an act is likely to raise concern for the safety or development of one, several or all individuals involved. This act may take the form of gestures, words, attitudes, or behaviours, including those targeting individuals of diverse sexual orientations and/or gender identities¹.

This definition applies without distinction to student perpetrators aged 12 and over but requires an assessment of reported sexualized behaviours in order to apply it to preschool-aged children or students under 12 years of age. It should be noted that sexualised behaviours exhibited by students under 12, considered either unhealthy or inappropriate in a school context, are therefore not targeted by this definition².

- **Discrimination:** Every person has a right to full and equal recognition and exercise of his human rights and freedoms, without distinction, exclusion or preference based on race, colour,

¹ Gouvernement du Québec. (n.d.). *Violence sexuelle dans le milieu scolaire : Définition et signalement*. Protecteur national de l'élève (2025), Énoncé de position institutionnelle relatif à la qualification des actes de violence à caractère sexuel.

² Gouvernement du Québec. (n.d.). *Violence sexuelle dans le milieu scolaire : Portée de la définition et considérations selon l'âge des élèves*. Protecteur national de l'élève (2025), Énoncé de position institutionnelle relatif à la qualification des actes de violence à caractère sexuel.

sex, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, sexual orientation, civil status, age except as provided by law, religion, political convictions, language, ethnic or national origin, social condition, a handicap or the use of any means to palliate a handicap. Discrimination exists where such a distinction, exclusion or preference has the effect of nullifying or impairing such right (Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, s. 10).

5.2. Legal References

- Education Act, CQLR, c. I-13.3
- Youth Protection Act, CQLR, c. P-34.1
- An Act to prevent and stop bullying and violence in schools, Q.L., 2012, c. 19 (Bill 56)
- An Act Respecting the National Student Ombudsman, CQLR, c. P-32.01 (Bill 9)
- Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, CQLR, c. C-12
- Occupational Health and Safety Act, CQLR, c. S-2.1

5.3. Ministerial & Policy Frameworks

- Plan de prévention de la violence et de l'intimidation dans les écoles 2023-2028 du ministère de l'Éducation du Québec
- Quebec Government Framework Agreement on School Safety