

**Questions and Answers**  
**Policy On Safe And Caring Schools**  
**June 2013**

1. **Why is the section on Bullying and Violent Behaviour unique to the youth sector and the sections on Harassment and Violent Behaviour unique to the adult sector, employees and non-employees?**

In June 2012, through Bill 56 sections of the Education Act were modified in order to make the various players in the schools more accountable with respect to bullying and violence in schools. Bill 56 applies to the youth sector only and specifies the duties and responsibilities of all stakeholders and their partners with regard to bullying and violence. The youth sector is therefore dealt with in a separate section.

2. **Why does the school board not have “zero tolerance” with respect to students on drugs and/or alcohol?**

This policy is based, as are the school anti-bullying plans, on the concept of “zero indifference”. We commit to investigating each report or complaint and to providing if required the right combination of disciplinary and corrective actions to fit the situation and the individuals involved. “Zero tolerance” as a term or as a principle is far more open to misinterpretation as demanding immediate disciplinary sanction, often the severest allowable, without determination of or consideration for any mitigating or extenuating circumstances, or for whether there are appropriate corrective measures that could be undertaken to the benefit of all parties.

3. **Why is there not more clarification of a principal's discretionary power regarding weapons and firearms?**

Each school situation is unique and a list of “can” and “can’t” by its nature inhibits the principal’s discretion.

4. **Why is a recommendation for professional development regarding bullying and violent behavior not included in the policy?**

Bill 56 specifies the duties and responsibilities of all stakeholders and their partners with regard to bullying and violence. Professional development regarding bullying and violent behaviour is required by the Law.

5. **Why does the Policy not specify that all parents be informed when there’s a child or children with allergies in their child's class?**

Each school develops its own allergy practices keeping in mind the school board policy, the needs of its community and confidentiality. Any adjustment needs to be brought to the Governing Board.

**6. Why are there not more specific guidelines for schools' Codes of Conduct?**

Codes of Conduct are developed by the individual schools/centres to meet their own individual needs, while remaining in accordance with the policy and the Law. The Code of Conduct sets clear standards of behavior and specifies the consequences for student actions that do not comply. Questions and suggestions regarding the Codes of Conduct should be brought to the Governing Board.

**7. What is considered a “safe” intervention by parents with respect to bullying and violent behaviour?**

The anti-bullying and anti-violence act (Bill 56) requires that any student, member of staff or parent who observes or is made aware of an act of bullying or violence has an obligation to report that act to an appropriate member of the school staff. Telling the bully to stop and reporting the incident to staff is an example of a safe intervention. Physical interventions are not recommended.

**8. What is the difference between a report and a complaint with regards to bullying or violence?**

The anti-bullying and anti-violence act (Bill 56) requires that any student, member of staff or parent who observes or is made aware of an act of bullying or violence has an obligation to report that act to an appropriate member of the school staff. Once a report is made, a series of steps will be carried out until a resolution of the situation has been achieved. Should there be concerns about the manner in which a situation has been handled it is important to communicate with the administration. A procedure exists for these situations when parents/guardians are not satisfied with a decision that has been made. The procedure is fully outlined on the school board website under the title By-Law 9: Complaint Examination Procedure.