



# **Kuper Academy**

## **Junior School**

### **Action Plan**

### **Against Bullying & Violence**

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# Defining the Terms

## Mission Statement

Kuper Academy seeks to provide a challenging bilingual curriculum in a safe and secure educational environment. We encourage each child to develop to his or her highest potential – intellectually, emotionally and physically. We strive to create an environment in which all students develop a strong positive attitude towards learning and an appreciation and respect for the worth and dignity of all individuals in society.

## Definition & Interpretation

### Violence

***"...any intentional demonstration of verbal, written, physical, psychological or sexual conduct which causes distress and injuries, hurts or oppresses a person by attacking their psychological or physical integrity or well-being, or their rights or property."***

(Section 9 - Quebec Education Act Respecting Private Education, E-9.1)

(Section 13 - Quebec Education Act, I-13.3)

Any use of force: verbal, written, physical, psychological or sexual refers to an individual who demonstrates power in terms of strength and expresses or shows this power.

Intentional demonstration refers to an individual who acts purposefully with deliberate will. This is not limited to acts directed at others but can also include those of a self-directed nature.

Causes distress and injuries, hurts or oppresses a person refers to the devastating effects on victims, classmates and witnesses.

By attacking their psychological or physical integrity or well-being, or their rights or property refers to the degrees of violence which can affect an individual on the physical, psychological, social and/or material levels as well as infringing upon an individual's rights and freedoms.

## **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 injuries, hurts, oppresses, intimidates or ostracizes."***

(Section 9 - Quebec Education Act Respecting Private Education, E-9.1)

(Section 13 - Quebec Education Act, I-13.1.1)

## **Bullying is not Fighting**

It is an aggression or imbalance of power and not necessarily a physical fight. It should not be confused with a conflict which suggests a difference or differences which are opposite, e.g. a difference between two individuals, two groups, an individual and the group who are interacting because their interests, their objectives or values, their way of doing things, their rules or their ideas are in sharp contrast.

A fight, an insult or other threat restricted to two individuals or groups on an equal footing is not, inevitably, considered bullying.

## **Cyber-bullying**

This form of bullying can occur at any time from any place where the virtual world is accessible. It can happen away from supervision by responsible adults and can involve many participants. This allows for the circulation of images and words in an unlimited and irreversible way.

Cyber-bullying is particularly sinister by the fact that a perpetrator can be irresponsible through anonymity, knowing that it is often difficult to prove. This leads to less restraint on the part of the perpetrator who cannot see the results or effects of his/her actions.

Behaviours such as those mentioned earlier can be carried out through cyber-bullying as well. In addition, however, cyber-bullying can be: stealing identity, sending inappropriate messages, pictures or videos through postings on the Internet (YouTube, etc.) or through cell phone messaging and can spur others to isolate an individual.

The cyber-bully can pretend to be another person and often believes that he/she can remain unknown. Often times a cyber-bully will be spontaneous and will not think before acting.

## Is it bullying or not?

- is there an imbalance of power between the parties?
- are there feelings of powerlessness and/or distress being manifest in the student being aggressed?
- is there an act of intimidation or violence with the intention of doing harm?
- has there been repetition and persistence in the acts or abuses?

## Other forms of bullying

Bullying can show itself in diverse forms such as racial discrimination, violence and relationships, sexual discrimination. It can manifest itself in different forms of behaviour: -

- Physical:- hitting, kicking, spitting, punching, shoving, stealing or damaging property
- Verbal:- defiance, derisive laughter, name-calling, making humbling, threatening, sexist or racist comments
- Cyber:- use of cell phone, texting, e-mail or other social media to embarrass, harass, threaten, spread rumours, exclude from groups or damage a reputation
- Social:- isolating someone socially through exclusion, gossip or rumour, mockery

### Indirect bullying

Organising (from within the group) the belittling of the social status or the exclusion of a targeted individual from the group (e.g. making someone less popular, isolating an individual). This type of behaviour and attitude is often difficult to perceive.

### Some examples of indirect bullying

Divulging secrets, talking about someone "behind their back", writing insults (whether by e-mail, notes in the classroom, etc.), gossip, rumours, denigration, exclusion, non-verbal language (i.e. body language), etc.

# Prevention

## In-School Actions

At the start of each academic year, a student assembly will be held to review the school rules and expected behaviours. This will be supported by related topics taught during Ethics and Health classes, and review of the discipline code of conduct outlined in the student agenda. When and where necessary, guest speakers and/or resource programs will be used. This Action Plan will be available to parents and staff on our website, via COBA mail or in print.

## Information for Students

### Victims: How to make it stop

**Don't wait. Don't put it off.** If you do, it will only get worse. Speak to an adult you trust whether that be a teacher, a parent, a relative, school secretary, school counsellor, caretaker, etc.

Stay with your friends as much as possible. You are less likely to become a victim in this way.

Defending yourself is fine but sometimes it's not enough.

If you report bullying, you are not a "tattletale" or "ratter". You are just seeking an adult's help in a situation where you are not being respected and have been unable to handle it yourself.

### How to make cyber-bullying stop

First and foremost, you must protect yourself. You can do this by keeping in contact with your friends in person or on the telephone and not online. You should never give out your passwords, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, etc. unless it is to people you trust. Do not accept any invitations through e-mail, Facebook, etc. from people you do not know.

You must also:

Avoid sending an insulting or threatening reply because it could make matters worse.

Stop yourself from responding to any threatening messages.

Delete or block addresses and other contact information from anyone threatening you.

Save all threatening messages that you receive so that they can be tracked.

Seek an adult you can trust when you feel your safety has been threatened.

## **Witnesses**

### **What To Do If You Witness Bullying**

If you witness an act of bullying you have an important choice to make. You can stand by and watch, in which case you would then become part of the problem and you make the situation worse. You can choose to get involved by helping the victim and discouraging the bully.

Bullies are people who look for attention. You encourage bullies if you do nothing when you see someone being bullied. If you feel safe, tell the bully to stop or go get help from an adult.

Staying quiet or doing nothing only encourages a bully. Try to be a helper of the victim not an encourager of the bully.

When reporting bullying remember that you are not a 'tattletale' or a 'squealer' because your actions are really helping to protect the victim.

Offer assistance to the victim and show your support. Get them involved in your safe group at recess and lunch time.

If you are unsure about confronting the bully directly, find an adult and let them know.

### **What To Do If You Witness Cyber-bullying**

If you know a friend is being harassed you must speak to a trusted adult and get them involved. You should report any incident to that trusted adult. You should encourage the victim to keep all threatening messages as proof of the bullying and you should make it a practice to never pass along or resend any offensive messages.

### **Who You Should Talk To**

You can speak or write to a teacher or the Headmaster describing when and where the bullying happened.

You can hand in a written note to the school secretary with your name on it or you can send an e-mail through COBA to the headmaster or an e-mail to [hposh@kuperacademy.ca](mailto:hposh@kuperacademy.ca).

At any time, you can talk to an adult and/or to your parents.

# Information for Parents

## Parents of a Student Victim

### **How to recognise that your child is being bullied**

- does your child seem depressed or anxious?
- does it appear that your child is suffering from low self-esteem?
- does your child fear going to certain places (school, playground)?
- has your child suddenly lost interest in a favourite activity?
- does your child often complain of feeling sick or not wanting to go to school?
- have your child's grades been lower for no apparent reason?
- has your child suddenly stopped using the Internet?

### **If you find that your child is a victim of intimidation you must:**

Comfort your child by staying calm and taking the time to listen.

Don't blame your child but ask your child to describe in detail what is going on.

Reassure your child that you are on his/her side in this situation.

### **How to intervene on behalf of your child**

- encourage your child to identify the bully. This often takes courage but your child must know that it is necessary in order to correct the problem. Assure your child that their report will remain confidential.
- give your child the confidence to know that you are on their side and will do all you can to help him/her.
- tell your child that any reprisals can make matters worse.
- encourage your child to stay with friends who he/she can rely on.
- suggest staying in areas which are supervised, thus limiting the chance of being bullied.
- inform your child's teacher, secretary or administrator if the bullying is happening at school so they can help resolve the problem.
- watch your child's behaviour carefully and remain in touch with all the informed adults who are helping to resolve the situation.
- if you feel a meeting is necessary with school personnel, do not hesitate to request one.

You can always contact the school to report an incident even if your child is not involved.



## **Parents of a Student Victim, Perpetrator or Witness**

### **What Can You Do?**

What can you do if your child tells you (or you suspect) that he/she is being bullied?

What can you do if your child has witnessed an incident of bullying?

What can you do if you suspect your child is bullying others?

Help your child report the incident. Contact the Headmaster immediately.

The Headmaster will commence a follow-up by informing you of the measures to be taken in order to investigate the situation. This will be followed by a verification of facts based on the information gathered from the victim, witness(es) and perpetrator(s) as well as what actions are taken to help resolve the situation so that there is support for the victim.

### **Measures for protecting your child from cyber-bullying**

With the increased accessibility and use of electronic devices, intimidation often occurs through these media. When this occurs action must be taken to correct the situation.

As a parent, it is important to keep an eye on your child's internet activities. You can have the child's computer in a common area of the house rather than in the bedroom and set scheduled times for its use. Encourage your child to sidestep chat rooms, online games, etc. thus avoiding convenient places for cyber-bullies.

Be aware of the legal age restrictions for the various social media applications.

It would be good advice for your child to balance friendships between online time and in-person time.

If your child becomes a cyber victim you should make sure he/she:

Avoids sending an insulting or threatening reply because it could make matters worse.

Stops responding to any threatening messages.

Deletes or blocks addresses and other contact information from anyone threatening him/her.

Saves all threatening messages received so that they can be tracked.

Talks with you about the situation in order to get the help and support necessary.

MELS suggested website – <http://irightthewrong.com>