



OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

Schools in Manitoba are committed to providing safe and caring places for learning. Guided by *Safe and Inclusive Schools* legislation, Manitoba school boards are proactive in creating and sustaining safe schools. Amendments in 2013 to *The Public Schools Act* directed Manitoba school boards to update and implement policy in schools to provide safe and inclusive learning environments, including a policy on respect for human diversity and actions such as professional learning for staff on bullying prevention.

Creating a sense of belonging and safety for members of the school community helps schools in addressing priority areas of public education. These priority areas include

- supporting students in meeting high levels of achievement
- applying principles of equity and inclusion throughout the education system
- developing global citizens actively involved in economic, social-cultural, and environmental sustainability
- supporting well-being (cognitive, emotional, social, physical, and for some, spiritual)
- engaging parents, education partners, and communities in decisions around education

Principals, through school planning and collaborative practices, implement school division policy and develop procedures to provide learning environments that are respectful and safe. With parents* as partners, educators do their best to ensure all children and youth feel safe, confident, and capable as they interact with others and develop as learners.

In a safe and caring school, the whole school community develops awareness, skills, and knowledge for well-being, positive relationships, and solution-focused problem solving. Students affected by bullying behaviours and other forms of harm receive support to address and restore their sense of safety and belonging. Students exhibiting bullying behaviours also receive support and necessary intervention. Schools recognize the complex nature and impact of bullying behaviours and the importance of whole-school planning for safety and response.

Manitoba Education and Training is committed to supporting schools in planning for the provision of safe learning environments for all children and youth. *Safe and Caring Schools: A Whole-School Approach to Planning for Safety and Belonging* replaces the 2005 document *A Whole-School Approach to Safety and Belonging: Preventing Violence and Bullying*.

* Note: In this document, the term *parent* refers to family, guardian(s), or a child and family services worker or agency/region. The term is used recognizing that more than one of these people may be involved in the life of a child/youth.

Overview

The planning process outlined in this document is intended to support existing planning in Manitoba schools. With a focus on safety and response, four perspectives in a **whole-school approach** are strategically incorporated to inform school teams as they engage in a **five-step planning process** (see Figure 1 at the end of this overview). Typically, the planning process described in this document is applied to revise and monitor an existing plan or to develop a new school plan.

This support document is based on current research and evidence-based practice in planning for and sustaining positive, healthy, and safe schools, and has been developed to

- apply a whole-school approach in planning for safety and response
- provide steps to develop a safe and caring school plan
- share tools, research, and resource links
- support existing school and/or school division planning, initiatives, and expertise



Manitoba Education and Training. *Planning and Reporting*
www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/ssdp/index.html

USING THIS DOCUMENT

Document Content and Organization

This support document includes the following sections:

- This **Overview**, in addition to information about using the document, provides the following:
 - The **Background and Purpose** introduces the purpose, intended audience, and content of this document.
 - The **Manitoba Context** reaffirms the Philosophy of Inclusion in Manitoba schools, where every individual feels accepted, valued, and safe. A summary of *Safe and Inclusive Schools* legislation and Manitoba's Anti-bullying Action Plan is provided with links and references to clarify the purpose of intentional planning.
- In **Whole-School Approach: Evidence-Based Practice**, four evidence-based perspectives are presented: **comprehensive school health, three-tiered planning, social-ecological systems, and strengths-based practices**. These perspectives help to identify needs, establish priorities, and monitor a plan for meaningful implementation. These perspectives underlie the five-step planning process.
- **Five Steps in Planning for Safety and Belonging** guides school principals through a planning process that engages and empowers members of the school community in planning for the provision of safe learning environments. This planning process is meant to support existing school planning processes in Manitoba schools.
- The **Appendices** include a summary of evidence-based practices to support the four perspectives outlined in this document. Proactive and responsive strategies are charted to reflect a whole-school approach as described in the document. A safe school plan template is provided, along with a sample plan. Related online resources are listed for further exploration.
- The **References** list all the resources referred to in the document.

Hyperlinks

Throughout this online document, hyperlinks are included, allowing readers to access the information directly. Many of these resources were produced by Manitoba Education and Training.

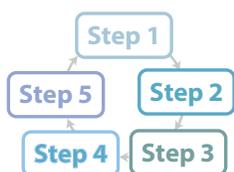
Guide Graphics

The following guide graphics are used in the document to provide organizational cues and to draw the reader’s attention to key resources, related support material, and tools.



A Whole-School Approach: Evidence-Based Practice

This diagram illustrates the interrelationship of four planning perspectives in addressing a whole-school approach to planning: Comprehensive School Health, Three-Tiered Planning, Social-Ecological Systems, and Strengths-Based Practices.



Five Steps in Planning

This planning cycle, familiar in education, represents an ongoing cyclical process:

- Step 1: Coordination
- Step 2: Needs Assessment
- Step 3: Evidence-Based Plan
- Step 4: Implementation
- Step 5: Monitor, Reflect, and Evaluate

Suggested Resources

This document refers to

- provincial acts and regulations
- provincial resources and documents: Manitoba Education and Training and related departments
- resource materials
- links to online resources



Sample Implementation Strategies

Examples of strategies and actions to clarify concepts described are provided.



Appendices

The appendices are referred to throughout the document, guiding the reader to supports provided.



MANITOBA CONTEXT

Manitoba's Philosophy of Inclusion

The philosophy of inclusion is common practice in the day-to-day experience of students in classrooms and schools across the province of Manitoba. An inclusive school is a respectful and safe place for all members of the school community. A whole-school approach to planning for a safe school as described in this document is based on the philosophy of inclusion.

Manitoba Education and Training is committed to fostering inclusion for all people. Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that allows every individual to feel accepted, valued, and safe. An inclusive community consciously evolves to meet the changing needs of its members. Through recognition and support, an inclusive community provides meaningful involvement and equal access to the benefits of citizenship.

In Manitoba, we embrace inclusion as a means of enhancing the well-being of every member of the community. By working together, we strengthen our capacity to provide the foundation for a richer future for all of us. (www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/aep/inclusion.html)



Overview

Sustainable Schools in Manitoba: Inclusion, Participation, Health, and Well-Being

Manitoba schools embed education for sustainable development into their annual school planning. School safety and well-being are included in components through a whole-school approach toward sustainability.

“Sustainable schools aim to be models of social inclusion, health, and well-being. Sustainable schools enable all learners to participate fully in school life while instilling a long-lasting respect for human rights, freedoms, culture, and creative expression. Schools have a crucial role to play in promoting the health of young people and shaping the attitudes and behaviours that affect it. Good health at an early age . . . can . . . improve pupils’ abilities to learn and their attitudes toward others. Sustainable schools promote community cohesion by providing an inclusive, welcoming atmosphere that values everyone’s participation and contributions—irrespective of background, culture, age, religion, or ability—and by challenging prejudice and injustice in all its forms.”

(IISD and Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, *Guide for Sustainable Schools in Manitoba*, 2nd Edition 40)

“Education for sustainable development (ESD) entails a reorienting of education to guide and motivate people to become responsible citizens of the planet. This document guides whole-school planning for ESD that includes a component of safety where sustainable schools aim to be models of social inclusion, health, and well-being.”

(IISD and Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, *Guide for Sustainable Schools in Manitoba*, 2nd Edition 5)



International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), and Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning. *Guide for Sustainable Schools in Manitoba*. 2nd ed. 2014. www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/esd/resources.html

Manitoba Safe and Inclusive Schools Legislation

Addressing safety in schools is not new in Manitoba. *The Safe Schools Charter* became provincial law in 2004 making it a duty of schools to provide students with safe and caring school environments.



Manitoba. *The Safe Schools Charter (Various Acts Amended)*. Winnipeg, MB: Queen's Printer—Statutory Publications, 2004.

<http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/2004/c02404e.php>

<http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/2004/c02404f.php>

Manitoba Education and Training. *Safe and Caring Schools*.

www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/safe_schools/index.html

In 2005, all Manitoba schools were required to have a code of conduct and a current emergency response plan with the support of a Safe School Advisory Committee.



Manitoba: Provincial School Code of Conduct

The Public Schools Act (PSA) requires that the principal of each school, in consultation with the **safe school advisory committee**, establish a code of conduct for the school. Principals are required to ensure that the annual review of the school's code of conduct and emergency response plan is completed by October 31 of each year. The Appropriate Disciplinary Consequences in Schools Regulation (92/2013), under *The Education Administration Act*, requires the principal to ensure that disciplinary consequences for violation of the code of conduct are consistent with any directives from the Minister.

Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning. *Safe and Caring Schools: Provincial Code of Conduct: Appropriate Interventions and Disciplinary Consequences*.

www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/safe_schools/links.html

Manitoba Education and Training. *Manitoba Administrative Handbook for Schools: School Administration*.

www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/policy/admin/



Safe School Advisory Committee

A safe school advisory committee is to consist of the following members:

- the principal
- a teacher from the school, selected by the teachers of the school
- a parent of a pupil attending the school, appointed by the principal in accordance with the regulation
- where the school includes Grades 9 to 12 and has a student council, the president or another member of the student council appointed by the student council

Manitoba. *Safe Schools Regulation*, M.R. 77/2005, *The Education Administration Act*. Winnipeg, MB: Queen's Printer—Statutory Publications, 2005.

http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/regs/current/_pdf-regs.php?reg=77/2005

The Public Schools Amendment Act (Cyber-Bullying and Use of Electronic Devices), 2008, expanded the definition of bullying to include cyberbullying and required school boards to establish policy for the appropriate use of electronic devices.

Further amendments to *The Public Schools Act*, along with Manitoba's Anti-bullying Action Plan, 2012, strengthened the provision of school safety:

- *The Public Schools Amendment Act (Reporting Bullying and Other Harm)*, 2011, requires adults in schools to report unacceptable student conduct.



Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning. *Safe and Caring Schools: Taking Action Against Bullying*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, 2014. Available online at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/support/taking_action/index.html.

- *The Public Schools Amendment Act (Safe and Inclusive Schools)*, 2013, revised the definition of *bullying* and required school boards to expand policies related to appropriate technology use and the reporting of cyberbullying, and directed school boards to establish respect for human diversity policies that promote the respect and acceptance of others in a safe, caring, and inclusive school environment.

Manitoba's Definition

Bullying is behaviour that is intended to cause fear, intimidation, humiliation, distress, or other forms of harm to another person's feelings, self-esteem, body, or reputation, or is intended to create a negative school environment for another person.

Bullying takes place in a context of a real or perceived power imbalance between the people involved and is typically, but need not be, repeated behaviour.

It may be direct (face to face) or indirect (through others), and it may take place through any form of expression—including written, verbal, or physical—or by means of any form of electronic communication (referred to as cyberbullying), including social media, text messaging, instant messaging, websites, or email.

The Public Schools Act, 2013, Section 1.2



Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning. *Safe and Caring Schools: Respect for Human Diversity Policies: A Support Document for Manitoba School Divisions and Funded Independent Schools in Developing Human Diversity Policies—Part of Manitoba's Anti-bullying Action Plan*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, 2015. Available online at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/support/human_diversity/index.html.

Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning. *Safe and Caring Schools: A Resource for Equity and Inclusion in Manitoba Schools (MB MYGSA)*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, 2014. Available online at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/safe_schools/links.html.



Overview

- **Provincial Code of Conduct**, announced in 2013, set out a range of appropriate disciplinary consequences for all schools to consistently follow. The Appropriate Disciplinary Consequences in Schools Regulation 92/2013 under *The Education Administration Act* confirms and restates the authority of principals, schools, and school divisions, and requires principals of Manitoba schools to ensure that appropriate interventions and disciplinary consequences are included in their school codes of conduct.



Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning. *Safe and Caring Schools: Provincial Code of Conduct: Appropriate Interventions and Disciplinary Consequences*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, 2014. Available online at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/safe_schools/links.html.

Defining a Whole-School Approach

A whole-school approach to planning for safe, caring, and inclusive schools views the school as a multi-dimensional and interactive system. This approach is implemented through coordinated planning that facilitates shared leadership and engages the school community with an understanding that all members (e.g., students, parents, educators, school, and community) assume responsibility for safety and belonging.

With a focus on comprehensive school health, a whole-school plan for safety applies evidence to identify needs and establish priorities. A three-tiered continuum of supports is developed with strengths-based strategies and practices. Whole-school implementation involves building capacity throughout the school community through collaborative action to create conditions for well-being, safety, and learning. This is an ongoing planning process of reviewing, reflecting on evidence, and identifying next steps in the provision and sustainability of school safety.



See Appendix A for a summary on **Evidence-Based Practices in the Planning for Safe and Caring Schools**.

The Manitoba model presented in this document illustrates a whole-school approach based on four evidence-based perspectives: **comprehensive school health, three-tiered planning, social-ecological systems, and strengths-based practices**, to focus a **five-step planning process** in the creation of a plan for a safe and caring school (see Figure 1).

Whole-School Approach to Planning for Safety and Belonging



Figure 1: A Whole-School Approach to Planning for Safety and Belonging

The four perspectives in addressing a whole-school approach to planning, represented in the centre of the graphic above, are discussed in a broad sense in the next section of the document. Resources are provided for further information. An outline of each planning step where these perspectives are applied follows.

