

SAFE SCHOOL ACTION PLAN FOR THE YEAR 2022-2023

Level of instruction: French Immersion, Elementary

Number of students: 305

Date of Action Plan revision: November 2022

Date of Governing Board approval: January 17 2023



Principal's Signature: Rosana Caplan

Governing Board Chairperson's Signature: Shoshana Weinberger, Chair.

Quebec Education Act (QEA)

Bullying: Any repeated direct or indirect behavior, comment, act or gesture, including in cyberspace, whether deliberate or not, 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.

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.

EMSB Safe Physical and Cyber Environment Policy (2013)

The English Montreal School Board (EMSB) believes that every member of its community has the right to learn and work in a safe physical and cyber environment. The EMSB advocates a strong safety and prevention focus which includes student education and support, as well as professional development as per the Quebec Education Program (Q.E.P.) and the EMSB's Strategic Plan.

Our Safe School Action Plan

This plan outlines the measures for preventing and responding to acts of bullying and violence in our school in accordance with the EMSB Safe Physical and Cyber Environment Policy and the Quebec Education Act (QEA).

At Merton all our rules of conduct are focused on creating a peaceful, happy and safe environment for children to share as they engage in learning and playing together. Every staff member at Merton sees herself or himself as responsible for all the students entrusted to our care. In guiding our children we aim to:

- Make them aware of the effects of their behaviour.
- Model for them and teach them safe, fair and helpful ways of behaving.
- Help them correct what they did wrong when possible, and/or replace the negative behaviour with positive action.

Respect and Responsibility for self, others, and our environment are the “bottom line” commitments of the Merton Community, and they are reflected in our behaviour guidelines. We expect students, parents/guardians, staff members and others who witness or learn about an act of violence or bullying involving a student to report it promptly. Our school administration will take the necessary steps to investigate reports and ensuring the safety of those concerned.

Safe School Team

Our Safe School team is working to ensure safety and maintain a positive school environment. Every year, members of our team review and update our Safe School Action Plan.

Our Safe School Team members are:

Coordinator’s name and position: Kimberley Davey, Resource teacher

Members: Heidi Loerick (Staff Assistant), Kimberley Davey (Resource Teacher), Samantha Patel (Parent, Head of Home and School Association), Rosana Caplan (Principal)

School Climate

Assessing the school climate helps us understand how safe students feel in their learning environment and allows us to reflect on what improvements we can make to reduce the potential of bullying and violence. Our school collects data from the following sources:

Tell Them From Me Student Survey Results

Bus Warnings and Bus Suspension Reports

Suspensions from school (in school suspensions only) and Incident reports

Informal Incident Record Keeping

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Based on our data analysis, we have established the following priorities for the coming school year:

1. To continue developing the capacity of lunch monitors to handle behavior problems and conflict between students through training and support.
2. To decrease the rate of Merton students who report victimization resulting from bullying on the OURSCHOOL Survey.
3. To increase the rate of elementary students who report feeling safe attending school on the OURSCHOOL Survey.
4. To decrease the level of anxiety as reported by Merton students which has reached an all time high of 33% this year.

It should be noted that the small sample size of our school makes these statistics very unstable and prone to be influenced severely by even one additional report in any direction. That said, our approach will continue to be to strengthen and protect our achievements in the social-emotional realm and continue to tackle these concerns in a proactive manner.

Prevention

As part of a wider effort to increase protective factors and educate on issues related to bullying and violence, our school will:

- Provide for at least two meetings a year for lunch monitors to discuss behavior management, to be followed by supervision on site (outside) by administration and extra support by CCWs.
- Ensure that, whenever a student is suspended, they have an opportunity to reflect on their actions, take responsibility for poor

choices made, and correct the result of their behavior to the extent that is possible.

- Involve parents whenever necessary to ensure continuity of expectations at home and in school. Strengthen our partnership with families: Communication with parents regarding the social and emotional needs of their child has been ongoing and we are proud of our “team approach” to each child in this and every other area of their development.
- Offer programming that is supportive of Social Emotional well-being, whether it is run by school personnel who have undergone special training or by outside organizations. For example, last year (2021-2022) we were able to offer a 10 week mindfulness course to students by a trained facilitator. This year (2022-2023) CCS will offer our students their programs “The Lion’s Roar” (social skills for Cycle 1), “Transition to High School” (self-esteem, agency and advocacy for Grade 6) and TEAMS (schoolyard animation for Grade 4 students: fair play, conflict resolution, teamwork). The SPVM will offer cyber-bullying awareness workshops to Grades 5 and 6 students.
- Continue Spiritual Animation on the topic of kindness, open-mindedness and prevention of bullying and exclusion.
- Include programs to sensitize students to special needs and different populations in order to increase tolerance and acceptance.
- Build on the EMSB theme of respect and inclusion through our own in-house programming based on Merton’s 5 school values.
- Other opportunities will be pursued as they arise.

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Collaborating with Families

Families are instrumental in helping schools prevent, detect and resolve incidents of bullying and violence. Through such means as organized events, distribution of information sheets, newsletters posted on the school website, presentations and individual meetings, our school will actively support and encourage families to:

- Recognize signs of distress in their child.
- Understand the difference between conflict and bullying.
- Report suspected acts of bullying or violence to the school administration.
- Reinforce pro-social behaviours in their child/youth.
- Collaborate with school staff in finding solutions if their child is involved in acts of bullying or violence.

Response Procedures

Our school is committed to ensure that professional and teaching staff members receive ongoing training on how to respond appropriately when witnessing or being made aware of harmful behaviours. Claims of bullying and violence will be investigated according to guidelines established in our school. Emphasis will be on assuring safety, promoting accountability with consideration to mitigating factors, and repairing harm.

Reporting Procedures

The protocol for reporting incidents of bullying and or violence will be described in the student agenda and on the school's website. The protocol will explain that:

The protocol for reporting incidents of bullying and or violence will be described in the student agenda and school website, where this document will be made public. The protocol will explain that:

- Students are provided with confidential, safe and age-appropriate ways to report an incident (e.g. by talking to a staff member, by submitting a note, etc).
- Staff members report in person or in writing to alert the administration to investigate and follow up promptly after an incident has occurred.
- Parents/guardians can report to their child's teacher or school administrator in person, with a direct phone call or by email

Measures to Protect Confidentiality

Our school pledges to take steps to protect the confidentiality of persons involved (victim, perpetrator, witness) in a bullying or violent incident. Our staff and families will be reminded that they are to share information about an incident strictly on a need to know basis with consideration to the feelings and privacy of individuals. Reports will be kept confidential in a secure location.

Supervisory & Support Measures

Our school professionals and staff may take the following steps to support any student who has been involved in, targeted or affected by bullying behaviors:

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- Consultation with school psychologist and other appropriate school professionals.
- Meetings with parents/guardians to reinforce social skills building activities at home.
- Provide relevant educational activities for students.

Disciplinary Measures

If after investigation, claims of bullying or violence are confirmed, the principal or designee will determine what disciplinary measures will be required. The school's disciplinary measures will be formative, fair (considering the nature, severity & frequency of act as well as any other mitigating factors) and respect legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of students.

In line with the EMSB Safe Physical and Cyber Environment policy, police may be contacted when a criminal act or threat of a criminal act may be involved.

Our Code of Conduct provides a detailed overview of our approach to discipline.

Follow-Up Measures

Our school will take necessary steps to protect students from harm or retaliation after an incident has occurred. The school will ensure a proper follow-up by:

- Documenting the investigation process, interventions and communications with parties involved.

- Maintaining communication with families and students involved in the incident.
- Verifying that support services are offered as required.
- Checking in with students to ensure well-being and to prevent escalation or retaliation.
- Providing educational services to the wider school population if the incident reflects a larger problem within the school.

For more information or inquiries, please contact:

Rosana Caplan, Principal at 514-481-7425 or rcaplan@emsb.qc.ca

Persons that are dissatisfied with the school's response can seek support from the School Board. The Principal will provide the appropriate forms and contact information.

Parents are regularly updated on new measures and ongoing initiatives through the Code of Conduct in their child's agenda and in our weekly emails, in addition to this document which is available in our school website every year

Resources

We encourage members of our school community to be informed on bullying and violence prevention by consulting the following:

- Safe Physical and Cyber Environment policy of the English Montreal School Board, available at www.emsb.qc.ca under Governance/Board Policies
- <https://kidshelpphone.ca/>

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- www.NeedHelpNow.ca
- <https://spvm.qc.ca/en/Fiches/Details/Bullying>
- [PREVNet](http://www.prevnet.ca/) (Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network): <http://www.prevnet.ca/>