

SAFE & CARING SCHOOLS POLICY



GOVERNMENT OF
NEWFOUNDLAND
AND LABRADOR

Department of Education
www.gov.nl.ca/edn

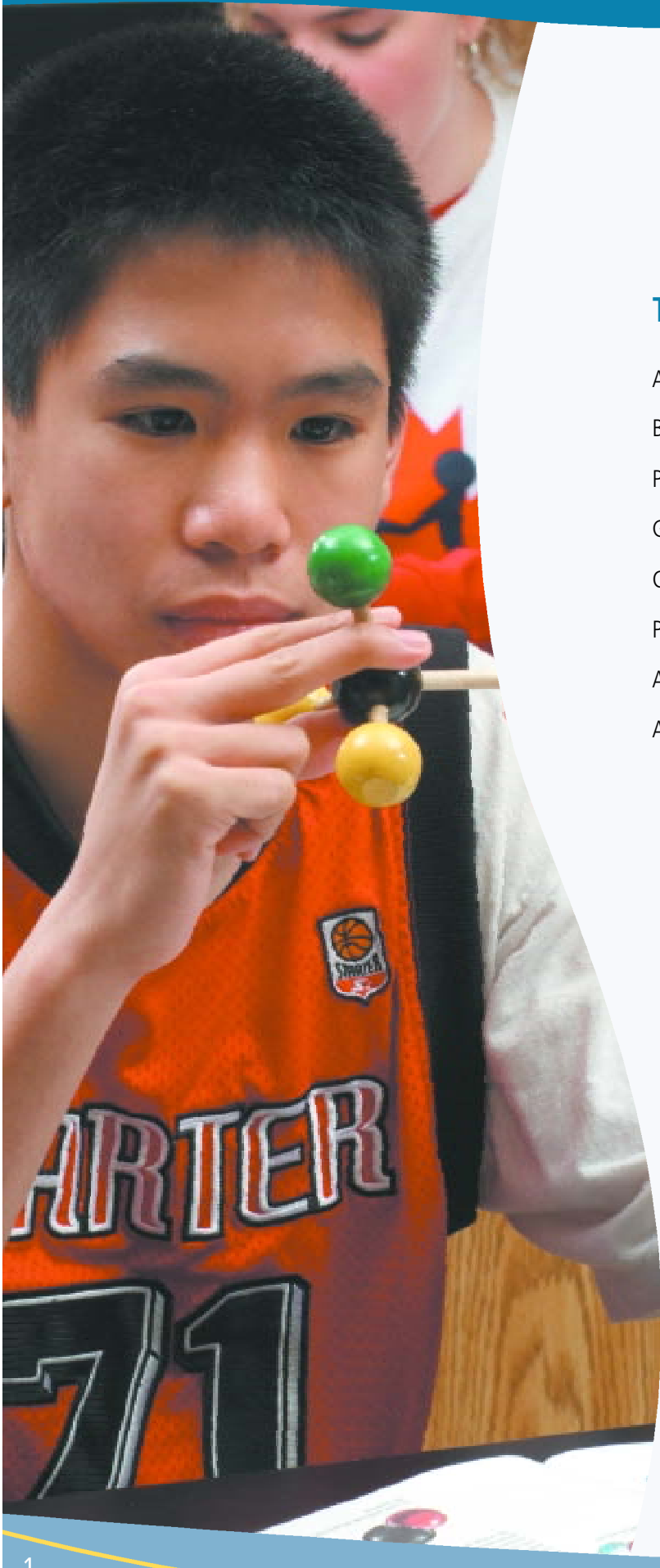


TABLE OF CONTENTS

- A Message From The Minister2
- Background3
- Purpose4
- Guiding Principles4
- Code of Conduct5
- Policy Statements6
- Appendix I11
- Appendix II12

A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

All children deserve to learn and grow in peaceful schools and communities. Ensuring our young people have the opportunity to be successful in school - and ultimately, in life - requires safe and caring schools where teachers, students, parents and the broader community work together to respect and support each other.

In an effort to achieve that goal, the provincial Safe and Caring Schools Policy sets the foundation for the work undertaken by all members of a school community to maintain positive learning environments. The importance of partnerships cannot be overstated. Working collaboratively helps us understand each other, celebrate our diversity, and develop creative solutions to problems which may arise.

As Minister of Education and Minister responsible for the Violence Prevention Initiative, I take this opportunity to recognize the contributions of the individuals and groups to the development of this policy. I offer my particular thanks to the members of the provincial Safe and Caring Schools Advisory Committee and the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Student Support Services.

I trust this policy will be widely communicated and implemented. Together we can create peaceful schools where every child feels nurtured, safe, and able to focus on learning.

Hon. Joan Burke - Minister of Education,
Government of Newfoundland & Labrador

May 2006



1.0 BACKGROUND

The vision of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, as promoted through the Violence Prevention Initiative, is one in which 'people live in safe, caring communities where there is respect for each other, and violence is unacceptable'.

In response to a growing concern about safety and well-being in our schools, and in recognition of its commitment to the Violence Prevention Initiative, the Department of Education began the implementation of a Safe and Caring Schools Initiative in the fall of 2001. This initiative has been proactive in developing curriculum and programs aimed at early intervention and education on violence prevention, and in developing safe and caring learning environments in our schools.

The Safe and Caring Schools Initiative builds on collaborative partnerships and the strong commitment and work of administrators, teachers, students, parents, and other community members who promote safe and caring communities and learning environments for children and youth.

The Department of Education supports the following as articulated in the Pan Canadian Consensus Statement (2002):

Participating in and contributing to a safe, respectful and positive learning environment is both the right and responsibility of children and youth, their parents/caregivers, school personnel and all community members. Schools, acting in partnership with their communities, can create and maintain these environments that foster a sense of belonging, enhance the joy of learning, honour diversity and promote respectful, responsible and caring relationships.

www.safehealthyschools.org/positivelearning.htm



2.0 PURPOSE

The goal of the Safe and Caring Schools Policy is to provide a framework for the development and implementation of provincial, district and school level policies and action plans to ensure that learning and teaching can take place in a safe and caring environment.

3.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Safe and caring learning environments are built on the following principles:

- a positive learning environment is respectful and caring of all of its members;
- fair and consistently implemented school policies and codes of behaviour contribute to positive environments and reduce bullying, racism, and other forms of harassment;
- an inclusive curriculum develops an understanding of the underlying causes of violence and inequality, recognizes diversity, promotes equal opportunity, and enhances safety, respect and mutual understanding;
- positive social behaviour, beliefs and values are taught and reinforced throughout the curriculum;
- disciplinary practices are pro-active and based on principles of mutual respect and shared responsibility; and
- the involvement of all members of the school community through shared decision-making, problem solving and inter-agency collaboration ensures these principles are universal.



4.0 CODE OF CONDUCT

All members of the school community have the right to feel safe and secure in all school-related activities and share in the responsibility for ensuring this is the case. The school community includes students, parents or guardians, volunteers, teachers, and other adults whose roles or jobs place them in contact with students in any school setting or school activity.

The Code of Conduct defined in this policy applies to all members of the school community while on school property, whenever the school is deemed responsible for a student (school buses, school-sponsored events and activities), whenever an individual is acting on behalf of, or is representing the school, and in all communications related to school events (e.g., meetings, phone calls, written correspondence, and electronic texts and messages).

The following Code of Conduct summarizes the Department of Education's expectation for safe and caring learning environments in Newfoundland and Labrador schools.

It is expected that all members of the school community will promote safe, caring and inclusive practice by doing their best to:

- effect an orderly, productive work and learning environment free from aggression or disrespectful behaviour;
- engage in activities and behaviour that promote health and personal well-being;
- relate to one another in a positive and supportive manner, with dignity and respect;
- embrace the diversity of all peoples, regardless of economic status, race, colour, national or ethnic origin, language group, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or ability; and
- support non-violent conflict resolution.



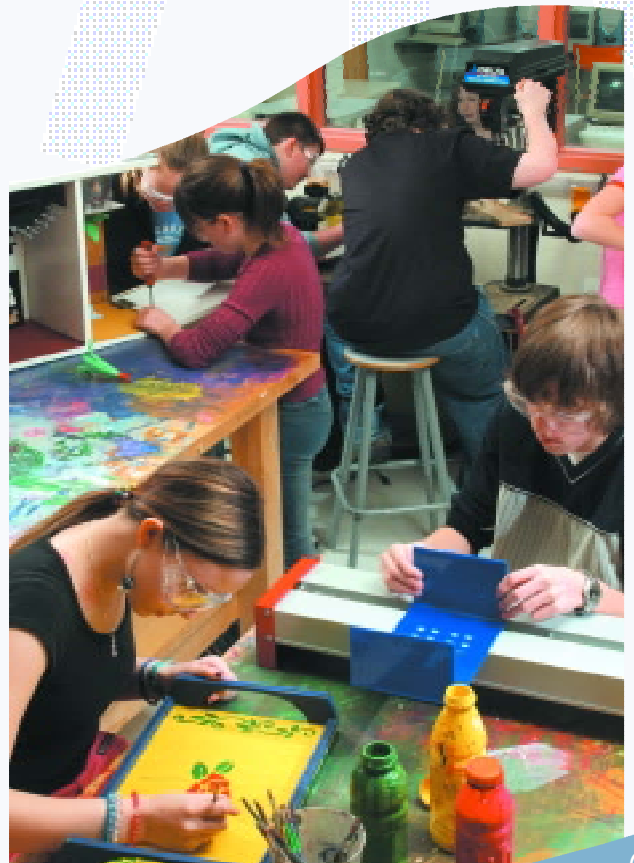
5.0 POLICY STATEMENTS

FOSTERING A SAFE & CARING LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

1. School districts will establish a Safe and Caring Schools Team that will provide district level leadership with respect to the Provincial Safe and Caring Schools Initiative.

The mandate of this district team will be to:

- ensure that an emphasis on safe and caring schools is maintained in the school district's strategic plan;
- develop and regularly review district policies that guide the implementation and enforcement of the provincial Code of Conduct and safe and caring schools action plans;
- involve, where possible, community partners such as regional committees for violence prevention in the development and review of district safe and caring schools policies and action plans;
- ensure clear communication of the district's safe and caring schools policies to all members of the school community, in a manner that encourages full support and commitment;
- establish guidelines for the implementation of preventative and pro-active school-wide practices that foster positive behaviours by all members of the school community;
- foster and promote the vital roles and responsibilities of the school, home and community in the establishment of a safe and caring learning environment;
- provide guidance and resources to schools as they develop safe and caring schools policies and as they implement school action plans; and
- establish guidelines and procedures to assist school personnel in managing potentially violent situations.



2. School communities, under the leadership of the principal, will identify a school team responsible for facilitating the Provincial Safe and Caring Schools Initiative.

The mandate of this school team will be to:

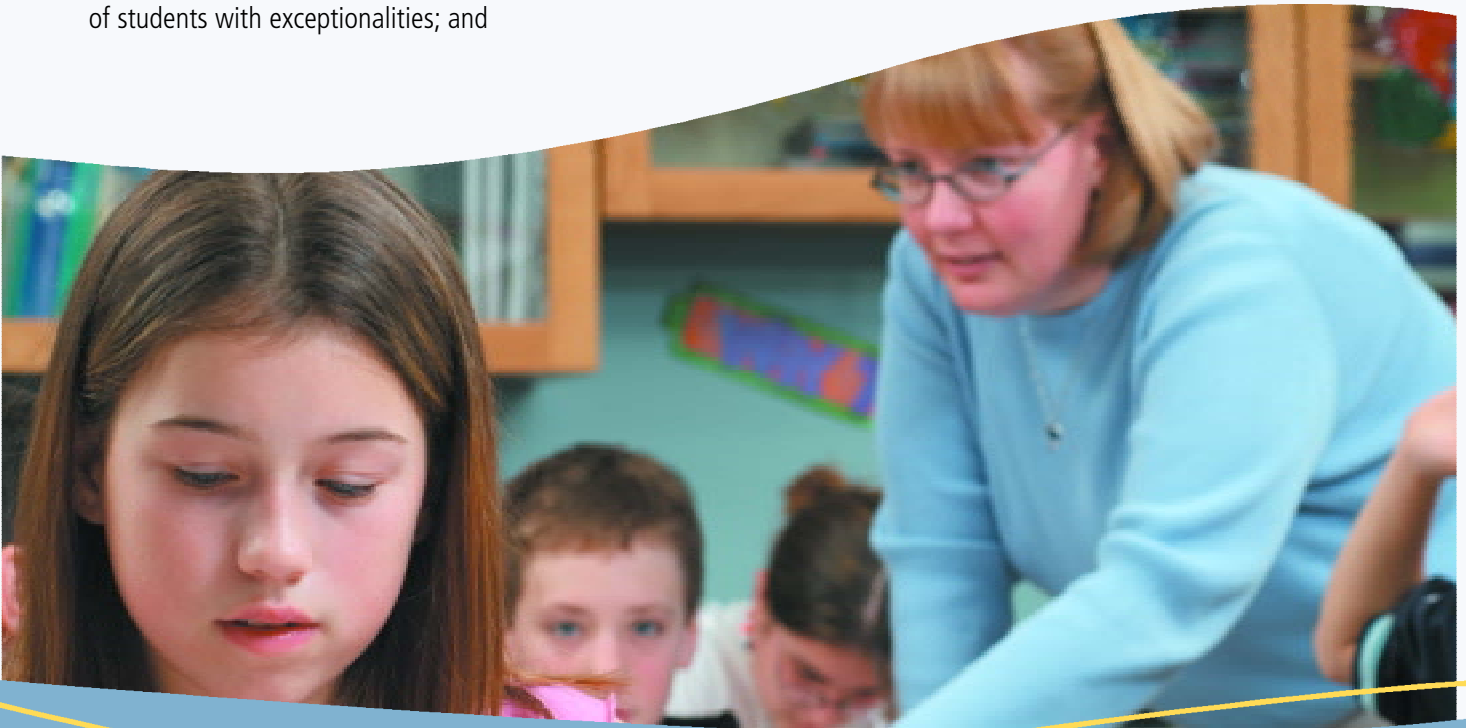
- collaborate with members of the school community to develop a safe and caring schools policy in accordance with district and provincial safe and caring schools policies;
- maintain and analyze school data for purposeful planning toward a safe and caring school;
- ensure that actions related to safe and caring schools are emphasized in the overall school growth and development plan;
- collaborate with members of the school community to develop a safe and caring schools action plan;
- ensure that the action plan for safe and caring schools includes the following:
 - school-wide prevention initiatives which include the active teaching of positive behaviour to all students;
 - guidelines for responding to traumatic events;
 - acknowledgement of individual needs when providing positive behaviour supports, including early identification of students with exceptionalities; and

- professional development and training of school personnel, including strategies for effective classroom management;
- ensure that the school's safe and caring schools policy and action plan are communicated to all members of the school community;
- ensure that the school code of conduct applies to the school community at large; and
- provide guidelines for responding to infractions of the school's code of conduct.

3. Teachers and school staff will do their best to facilitate and promote a safe and caring learning environment.

This will be accomplished by:

- modelling high standards for safe, caring and responsible behaviour;
- helping all students learn to their full potential and to develop positive self-worth;



- maintaining consistent expectations of positive behaviour for all students;
- collaborating with parents and other members of the school community;
- demonstrating appreciation and respect for diversity; and
- engaging in positive, non-violent conflict resolution.

- having an active interest in their children's academic and social progress;
- communicating regularly with the school;
- demonstrating appreciation and respect for diversity; and
- engaging in positive, non-violent conflict resolution.

4. **Students** will do their best to demonstrate respect for themselves and for others.

Students will demonstrate this by:

- appreciating and caring for themselves and others;
- appreciating and respecting diversity;
- arriving at school on time, prepared and ready to learn;
- abiding by the school's code of conduct and taking responsibility for their own actions; and
- engaging in positive, non-violent conflict resolution.

5. **Parents and/or guardians** will do their best to support the efforts of the school community in maintaining a safe and caring learning environment for all.

This will be accomplished by:

- participating in the development of, and supporting the safe and caring schools policy and code of conduct;
- encouraging and assisting their children to abide by the school's code of conduct and to demonstrate positive behaviour;



RESPONDING TO STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

6. Managing Unacceptable Behaviours: When there is deliberate non-compliance with the behavioural expectations of the codes of conduct, schools and school districts will follow established guidelines.

These guidelines will include the following actions:

- always address the behaviour;
- take immediate action to bring a stop to the behaviour;
- take further action in the form of an intervention toward a positive behavioural change;
- inform parents and/or guardians of their child's unacceptable behaviour and give them the opportunity to collaborate on actions toward behavioural change; and
- address the needs of those who may be adversely affected by the unacceptable behaviour.

7. Consequences: A range of consequences will be considered when responding to students' unacceptable behaviour.

Consequences will:

- be appropriate to the student's stage of development and consider the student's special needs;
- be logical and connected to the behaviour;
- reflect the severity of the behaviour and take into account the frequency and duration of the behaviour; and
- be timely.

The following behaviours are considered uncaring, unsafe and unacceptable:

- harassment, intimidation and violence;
- discrimination based on economic status, race, colour, national or ethnic origin, language group, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or ability;
- dissemination of hate propaganda including hate literature;

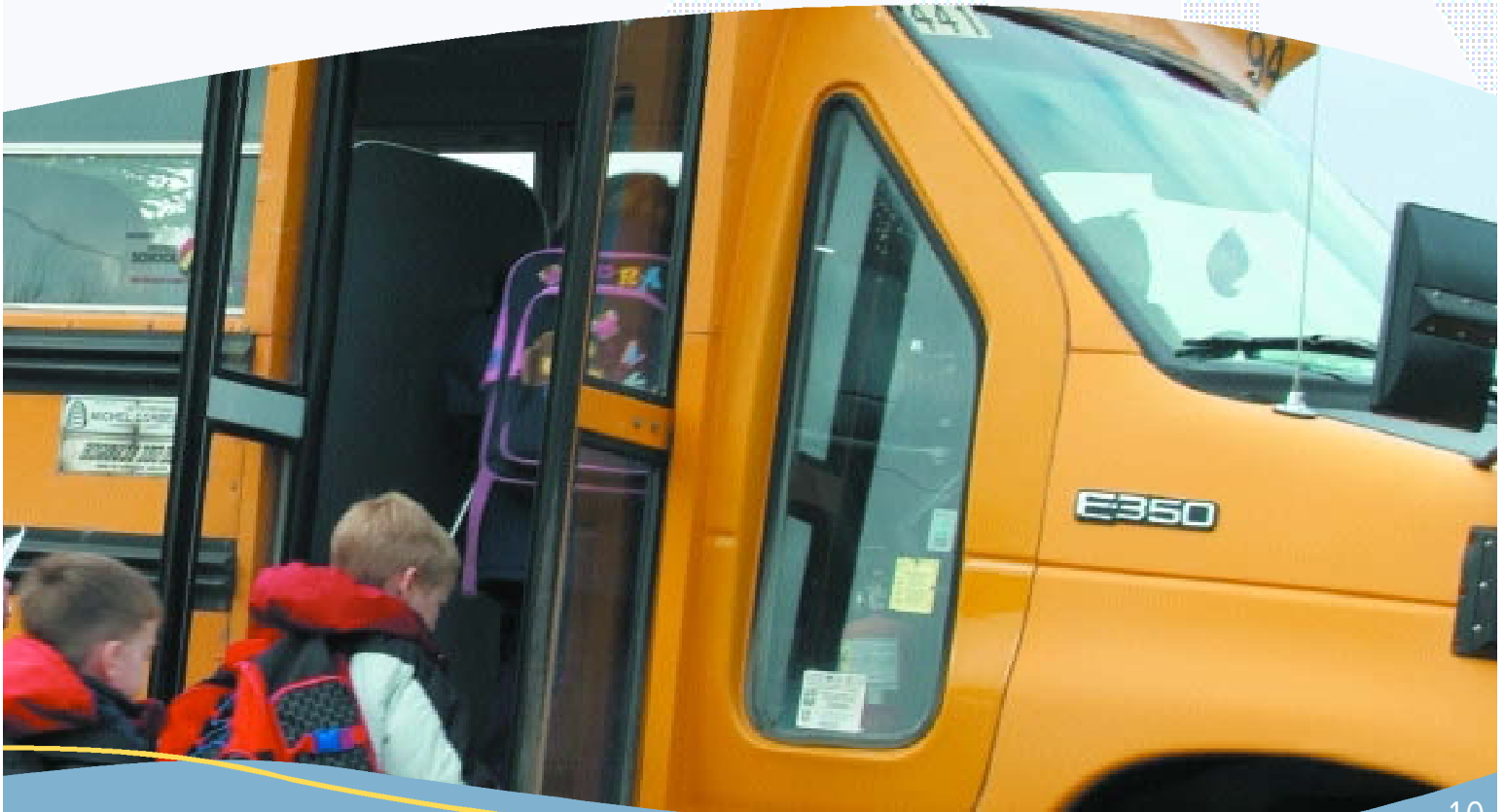


- use of, possession of, or providing to others, harmful and/or illegal substances;
- theft or intentional property damage;
- any behaviour that threatens the health or safety of any person (e.g., arson, bomb threats and tampering with safety equipment such as fire alarms);
- accusations involving falsehood or malicious intent; and
- any other behaviour which contravenes the Criminal Code of Canada.

These guidelines include:

- suspension procedures are in accordance with the Schools Act, 1997 (sections 36-39) and board by-laws (see Appendix 2);
- 'in-school' suspension will be given consideration as an alternative to 'out of school' suspension;
- a re-entry or transitional plan will be developed to ensure the student's successful return; and
- re-entry plans will include interventions that enable positive behavioural change.

8. Suspensions: There may be occasions when a student is suspended from the classroom or school premises to ensure the safety of school members. Guidelines will be established to ensure that procedures are fair and that schools engage in positive and effective efforts toward behaviour change.



APPENDIX I

GUIDING PRINCIPLES: INTERDEPARTMENTAL ANTI-VIOLENCE POLICY FRAMEWORK

Government has articulated a number of guiding principles fundamental to the achievement of a violence free society. These principles form the philosophical foundation for addressing the many forms and types of violence through legislation, service provision and public awareness.

The guiding principles are:

- People have the right to a safe and secure environment.
- Health, well-being and productivity are enhanced in a violence-free environment.
- The social and cultural roots of violence are based on inequality. While all women, children and the elderly are more likely to be victims of violence, factors such as disability, sexual orientation, economic status or racial origin can put them at even higher risk.
- Society reinforces violence through expressions of sexism, ageism, classism, heterosexism, and other biased attitudes.
- Violence is a choice and is preventable. There is strong evidence that effective intervention can reduce and prevent violence.
- Prevention of violence is everybody's responsibility.
- The elimination of violence requires a comprehensive response including prevention, public education, services and enforcement of the law.
- Criminal and other acts of violence and abuse require effective consequences including punishment under the law.



Violence **Prevention** Initiative

APPENDIX II

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION *(Schools Act, 1997)*

Suspension

- Sec.36(1) A teacher may suspend a student from a class period in accordance with the by-laws of the board.
- (2) A teacher shall report a suspension of a student to the principal as soon as practicable, but in any event before the end of that school day.
 - (3) A principal may in accordance with the by-laws of the board suspend a student from
 - (a) one or more class periods;
 - (b) one or more courses or school programs;
 - (c) school;
 - (d) riding on a school bus; and
 - (e) participating in an activity sponsored or approved by the board.
 - (4) A principal may reinstate a student suspended by the principal or a teacher.
 - (5) A period of suspension shall be in accordance with the by-laws of the board and shall be no longer than 30 school days in total in a school year.
 - (6) Notwithstanding subsection (5), the director may approve the extension of a period of suspension if the principal can demonstrate that the presence of the suspended student in the school threatens the safety of board employees or students or frequently and seriously disrupts the classroom or the school.

- (7) Where a period of suspension is extended under subsection (6), before reinstating the student, the director may require certification from a medical practitioner or other professional person whom the director considers appropriate, that the student no longer threatens the safety of board employees or students.
- (8) Where a principal suspends a student under paragraph (3) (b), (c), (d) or (e), the principal shall immediately
 - (a) inform the student's parent of that suspension;
 - (b) report in writing to the student's parent and the student all the circumstances respecting the suspension; and
 - (c) report in writing to the director all the circumstances respecting the suspension.
- (9) Upon receiving a report from a principal under paragraph (8) (c), the director, within 3 school days of receiving the report, shall
 - (a) uphold the suspension;
 - (b) alter the terms of the suspension; or
 - (c) cancel the suspension.
- (10) Where the suspension is cancelled under paragraph (9) (c) the director may strike the suspension from the student record.

Expulsion

- Sec.37(1) Where a student is persistently disobedient or defiant or conducts himself or herself in a manner that is likely to injuriously affect the proper conduct of the school, the principal shall
- (a) warn the student and record the date of and reason for the warning;

- (b) notify the student's parent, in writing, that the student has been warned;
 - (c) send a copy of the notice referred to in paragraph (b) to the director; and
 - (d) discuss with the student's parent the circumstances giving cause for the warning.
- (2) Where, after a reasonable period and consultation with appropriate employees of the board, it is determined that the student has not made a satisfactory effort to reform, the principal shall report in writing to the director and recommend to the director that the student be expelled.
 - (3) Prior to the director making an order under subsection (4), the parent or the student, if the student is 19 years of age or older, may make representations to the director.
 - (4) Within 3 school days of receiving a report under subsection (2) the director shall consider the recommendation and shall order that the student be expelled or not be expelled.
 - (5) A board may re-admit a student who has been expelled.
 - (6) Where a student is expelled, the director shall notify the parent or, where the student is 19 years of age or older, the student, of the right to have the expulsion reviewed.

Re-admission

- Sec.38 A student who has been expelled shall have the right to be re-admitted at the commencement of the next school year.
- Sec.39(1) Where a student has been expelled under section 37, a parent of the student or, if the student is 19 years of age or older, the student, may, within 15 days of the effective date of the expulsion, make a written request to the board that the expulsion be reviewed.
- (2) Upon receiving a request under subsection (1) the board shall appoint 3 of its members as a review panel to investigate the circumstances of the expulsion and to make an order upholding or reversing the order to expel the student.
 - (3) The order of a review panel made under subsection (2) is binding upon the student, school, board and other persons affected by it.

Corporal punishment

- Sec.42 A person shall not administer corporal punishment to a student in a school.

NOTES



Lined writing area consisting of horizontal blue lines for text entry.



**GOVERNMENT OF
NEWFOUNDLAND
AND LABRADOR**

Department of Education
www.gov.nl.ca/edn

P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL
A1B 4J6

Telephone: (709) 729-3008
Facsimile: (709) 729-2096