

Ministry of Education

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**MEMORANDUM TO:** Directors of Education  
Supervisory Officers and Secretary-Treasurers of School  
Authorities

**FROM:** Kevin Costante  
Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Education

**DATE:** October 19, 2009

**SUBJECT:** **Safe Schools Strategy and Bill 157: *Education Amendment Act***  
**(*Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act*), 2009**

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I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with an update on the Ministry of Education's Safe Schools Strategy.

The *Education Act* (the Act), as amended by the *Education Amendment Act (Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act)*, 2009 (Bill 157) was passed by the Legislature on June 1, 2009. It amends the safe schools provisions of the Act to require all school staff to report serious student incidents to the principal, requires principals to contact the parents of victims who have been harmed as a result of serious student incidents; and require staff to respond to incidents that may have a negative impact on the school climate. This legislation comes into force on February 1, 2010, at which time boards must have appropriate policies and guidelines in place based on Ministry policy.

The legislation builds on Ontario's safe schools strategy and is part of a comprehensive response to the Safe Schools Action Team report released in December, 2008 entitled, *Shaping a Culture of Respect in Our Schools: Promoting Safe and Healthy Relationships*. It will require all board employees in the school to play a role in addressing issues of inappropriate student behaviour to improve school climate and to support students who are victims.

To help school boards to implement these requirements, two Policy and Program Memoranda (P/PM) have been revised, P/PM 144, *Bullying Prevention and Intervention*; and P/PM 145, *Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour*. These are attached for your information and are posted on the ministry website at [www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca).

You will also see that, in addition to employees of the board, bus drivers must also be required to report in writing serious student incidents to the principal of the school. As a result, boards are required to include bus driver reporting requirements in their transportation policies and contracts.

In revising P/PM 145 you will note a clarification point for principals regarding part X of the Education Act, clause 265(1)(m) frequently referred to as the “exclusion” provision. A reference has been added to note that “exclusion” is not to be used as a form of discipline. In addition, if a principal does decide that it is necessary to exclude a pupil from the school, the principal is expected to notify the parents of the exclusion as soon as possible in the circumstances, and to inform them of their right to appeal under this clause. The legislation remains the same.

To further support the changes to the *Act* and the release of the P/PMs, training will be provided to board teams on October 20/21, 2009. Board teams will be responsible for training their respective school teams. School teams will provide training to teaching and non-teaching school staff in their schools.

You will also be interested to know that revised versions of the sample school climate surveys will soon be available on the Ministry’s website. The surveys have been revised to include questions relating to equity and inclusive education and to capture more information around incidents of sexual and gender-based bullying, as well as homophobia. The format of the surveys has been changed to allow more flexibility in their delivery. The surveys may be completed online, or schools may download them in pdf (read only) format or in Word. Online versions of the surveys will be linked to a calculation/assessment tool that will allow principals to print reports specific to their school’s results.

The Ministry appreciates all the work that boards have undertaken to help make our schools safer and we look forward to working with you on the implementation of the changes to the safe schools provisions of the *Education Act*.

Please see the attached link in order to access a full version of Bill 157  
[http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills\\_detail.do?locale=en&Intranet=&BillID=2161](http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&Intranet=&BillID=2161).

If you have any questions regarding the attached Policy and Program Memoranda, please contact the ministry office in your region. A list of Regional Offices is attached.



Kevin Costante  
Deputy Minister

Attachments  
c. Ministry of Education Regional Office Managers

## **Regional Managers**

### **Barrie Regional Office**

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### **Thunder Bay Regional Office**

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