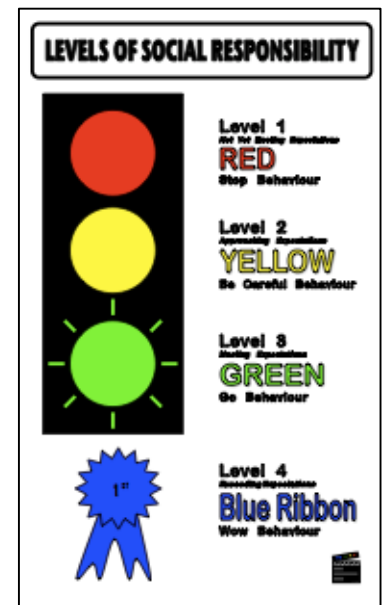**RICHMOND** SCHOOL DISTRICT NO.38

The BC Ministry of Education has developed a comprehensive, multi-pronged strategy to address bullying and enhance threat and risk assessment protocols in all school districts. The goal is to ensure all students enjoy a safe school culture and learning environment. The ERASE Bullying Strategy builds on the current work of Boards of Education and communities by addressing the following:

E.R.A.S.E bullying

Expect respect, and a safe education.

➢ Conducting multi-level training for educators and community partners with a focus on preventing bullying and creating safe, caring and connected school communities and to proactively identify and address threats.
➢ Developing formal Violence Threat Risk Assessment protocols to guide and coordinate the work of school and community partners
➢ Creating online resources for parents: http://www.erasebullying.ca

What does the ERASE Bullying Strategy look like in the Richmond School District?

The Ministry of Education's **ERASE Bullying Strategy** builds on Richmond's longstanding commitment to creating safe caring and respectful schools by focusing on student connectedness. Beginning in the 1990's, Richmond School District staffs began learning about **Positive Behaviour Support** (PBS) initiatives and since then, many of these practices have been implemented in a number of our schools. These efforts have been enhanced by the formation of the **Area Counsellor Team** (ACT) at the District level, which began supporting schools in 2002. As part of a district wide **Social Responsibility Project**, the Area Counsellor Team has worked with hundreds of teachers and thousands of students to help schools establish school-wide expectations and both teach and reinforce socially responsible behaviour. The Richmond School District is striving towards the development of consistent and system-wide application of these key concepts of effective practice, recognizing that the indicator of success is a student population that feels safe and connected in their own school and in the District as a whole.

LEVELS OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Level 1
RED
Stop Behaviour

Level 2
YELLOW
Be Careful Behaviour

Level 3
GREEN
Go Behaviour

Level 4
Blue Ribbon
Wow Behaviour

The following document is designed to assist parents, guardians and students in better understanding the **ERASE Bullying Strategy** and how it has been implemented in the Richmond School District.

As is always the case, parents and guardians are encouraged to talk with their child's teacher(s) when ever they have a concern. It is hoped that this document helps to provide some information to help guide that conversation should it ever become necessary.

RICHMOND
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"The Board of Education recognizes and welcomes its obligation to all members of the district community to provide a positive climate and a safe, healthy environment." (Policy 105)
The district Code of Conduct is a reference for what expected school wide behaviours are. The following excerpts from Policy Regulations are in place as a guide to help schools with its use.

Policy 105-R
(previously 502.1-R)

DISTRICT CODE OF CONDUCT

HOW WE LEARN AND WORK TOGETHER

The Board of Education recognizes its obligation to provide all members of our school district community with a positive climate and a safe, healthy environment.

As we learn and work together, we will…

1 Show respect for the diversity of the members of our school and district community.

2 Behave in a safe, considerate and courteous manner.

3 Not threaten, harass, intimidate or assault, in any way, any person within our school district community, through physical violence, print or electronic media.

4 Not be in possession of weapons, dangerous articles, alcohol or illegal drugs while in school or work.

5 Show respect and pride in our school district buildings and equipment through care and appropriate use of school district property.

6 Respect the non smoking environment of our schools and school district facilities.

Our expectations for how we learn and work together shall apply to everyone in our schools and at school functions.

The complete code of conduct is available online at:
sd38.bc.ca/codeofconduct

RICHMOND
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO.38

District Code of Conduct: How We Learn and Work Together

It is our collective responsibility to ensure that we are learning and working together positively.

District and school staff ensure that the Code of Conduct Policy, Regulations and Administrative Guidelines are implemented at each school and district facility.

The District Code of Conduct and any school Code of Conduct shall be prominently displayed in all schools and district facilities. It is to be communicated and reviewed with students, staff and parents at regular intervals (at least once per year).

Respect for Human Rights

− All students, staff, trustees and parents will be provided with opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills, awareness and behaviours to identify and eliminate all types of discrimination, harassment and bullying.

− School counsellors will be informed and knowledge- able about expectations pertaining to human rights, discrimination, bullying and harassment.

− Educational staff will be encouraged to adapt and include current learning resources and strategies to provide opportunities for all students and staff to develop positive awareness and respect for human rights and diversity.

− The District will outline appropriate behaviours and actions in order to prevent discrimination, harassment and bullying through greater awareness and dialogue that creates understanding and respect for diversity.
  o This understanding and respect applies to spoken word, gestures, physical actions, visuals, print or electronic media.

− The District will provide awareness and education for all new employees to enhance sensitivity to human rights issues related to all types of discrimination, harassment and bullying

− Information for students and staff will be available to enhance respectful communication and behaviour, including how to demonstrate:
  o Awareness and empathy
    ▪ To model respect and affirmation
  o To use appropriate language which is respectful in all situations

Reporting Incidents of Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying

All members of the district community at each school and district site have collective responsibility and will comply with the expectations of the District's Code of Conduct. Any violation will warrant intervention and/or disciplinary action.

Board Concurrence with Revision: 19 June, 2017

"Bullying … is a pattern of repeated aggressive behaviour, with negative intent, directed from one child to another where there is a power imbalance."

<u>Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do</u>
- Olweus, D.

This definition by Dr. Dan Olweus, the leading researcher in the field, identifies three critical conditions that distinguish bullying from other forms of aggressive behaviours:

POWER

- Children who bully aquire their power through physical size and strength, by status or by recruiting support of the peer group

INTENT TO HARM

- Children who bully generally do so with the intent to either physically or emotionally harm the other child
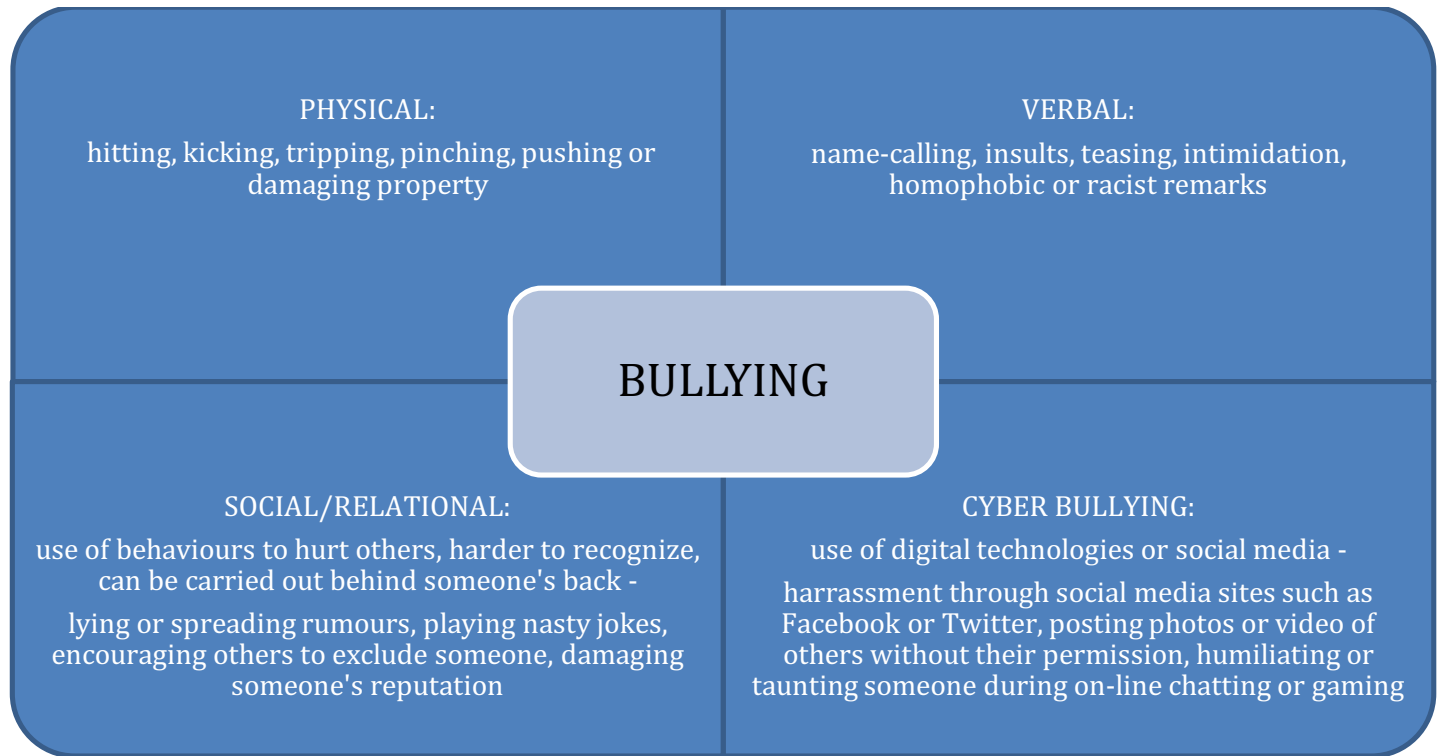
FREQUENCY

- Bullying is not a random act. Rather, it is characterized by frequent and repeated harrassment. This is what differentiates bullying from more common conflicts

When determining if a specific behaviour is bullying, consider whether or not it:

- involves a power imbalance

- is intended to harm

- is repeated over time

RICHMOND
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PHYSICAL:

hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching, pushing or damaging property

VERBAL:

name-calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks

BULLYING

SOCIAL/RELATIONAL:

use of behaviours to hurt others, harder to recognize, can be carried out behind someone's back -

lying or spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes, encouraging others to exclude someone, damaging someone's reputation

CYBER BULLYING:

use of digital technologies or social media -

harrassment through social media sites such as Facebook or Twitter, posting photos or video of others without their permission, humiliating or taunting someone during on-line chatting or gaming

Cyber Bullying can happen at any time. It can be public or in private and sometimes is only known to the target and to the person perpetuating the bullying.

Cyber bullying has changed the traditional face of bullying in schools in three significant ways:

➢ **Access:** It is virtually impossible for victims to get away from cyber bullies. Most students have access to all types of technology; cyber bullies have access to and can reach their victims at almost any time. Victims do not have a safe haven as they do in some cases of traditional bullying.

➢ **Scope:** Unlike traditional bullying, due to technology, the cyber bully audience has few, if any barriers; and the audience easily grows almost exponentially.

➢ **Anonymity:** Cyber bullying is not a face-to-face interaction and cyber bullies hide behind technology. Anonymity, which is inherent in electronic communication, promotes a lack of inhibition. As a result, normal behaviour restraints can disappear, allowing students to act harsher than they would in real life.

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We need to clearly identify the difference between conflict and bullying in order to appropriately respond to bullying incidents. While the two seem similar in some instances, there is actually a distinct difference:

Bullying is a persistent pattern of unwelcome or aggressive behaviour that often involves an imbalance of power and/or the intention to harm or humiliate someone. Bullying often results in feelings of distress for the victim.

Conflict, on the other hand, is generally a disagreement or difference in opinion between peers who typically have equal power in their relationships. It's usually an inevitable part of a group dynamic.

Bullying or Conflict?

Example # 1 (Secondary)

Two female members of the school basketball team are arguing with each other over the loss of a recent game. Annie blames Susan for the loss because when Annie was open during the last seconds of the game, Susan didn't pass the ball to her but instead took the shot herself and missed. Annie calls Susan a derogatory name and then pushes her into the change room lockers and storms out.

Example # 2 (Elementary)

A group of primary students are on the playground at recess. Two of the students start to argue when Patty wants Lisa trade recess snacks but Lisa doesn't want to. Patty becomes angry and tells Lisa that she can't play with the rest of them if she won't share her recess snack. When the girls don't support Lisa, she bursts into tears and runs back into the school.

These are both examples of conflict. In the first scenario, Annie may have had an **Intent To Harm** Susan but there is no discernible **Power Imbalance** nor has the behaviour been **Repeated Over Time**. In the elementary example, there appears to be a **Power Imbalance** with the peers supporting Patty over Lisa and there may even have been an **Intent To Harm** Lisa's feelings but there is no pattern of the behaviour being **Repeated over Time**.

The fact that one or even two of the elements of bullying exists does not automatically categorize the incident as bullying. Many conflicts include an imbalance of power and or an intent to harm but may be isolated occurrences and therefore are examples of inappropriate behaviour. An incident cannot be categorized as bullying unless there is a pattern of the behaviour being **Repeated Over Time**.

NOTE: Even though an incident does not fit the definition of bullying, it still needs to be responded to. **Inappropriate Behaviour**, if not consistently dealt with by staff, can easily escalate into behaviour **Of Concern** or **Of Serious Concern** and can evolve into a pattern of bullying.

adapted from:
ERASE Bullying website
BC Ministry of Education

Three Level Response to Inappropriate Behaviour or Bullying

Based on the work of Gail Ryan, University of Colorado

Adapted from Focus on Bullying

BC Ministry of Education

Level I
What to do at the first sign of INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

Level II
What to do when the Behaviour is OF CONCERN

Level III
What to do when the Behaviour is OF SERIOUS CONCERN (including Bullying)

I. Describe and
2. Respond

I. Describe and
2. Respond

3. Confront and
4. Prohibit

I. Describe and
2. Respond

3. Confront and
4. Prohibit

5. Report and
6. Refer

_____

Level I Response - inappropriate behaviour is responded to by describing the student's actions in terms that are clear and direct. Additionally, the impact of that behaviour on others is pointed out and the student is asked what alternative behaviour, that meets school-wide expectations, could be used instead or in the future.

Level II Response - the Describe and Respond steps are followed at this level as well. However, as the behaviour is either of a more concerning nature or is something that the student has been spoken with about previously, the student is confronted about the concerning nature of the situation and it is clearly communicated that the behaviour is prohibited. Typically, the student will receive a natural consequence and some sort of follow up will take place to ensure the behaviour is not continuing and to help the student learn an appropriate replacement behaviour.

Level III Response - the previous steps are applied as appropriate. However, when a behaviour is of serious concern, the problem may be significant enough to necessitate not only the assistance of school district personnel but also a referral one of our community partners.

Parents/Guardians are important partners in supporting a student who has displayed behaviour that is either Of Concern or Of Serious Concern. Additionally, parents of any student who may have been mistreated should expect to be contacted by the school to explain how their child will be supported.

While threats or acts of violence in a school setting are generally few in number and rare in Richmond, these types of incidents have the potential for physical harm and psychological trauma to both students and staff. Having a clear process for appropriately responding to threat related behaviours, or other behaviours of concern, helps ensure a learning environment for all.
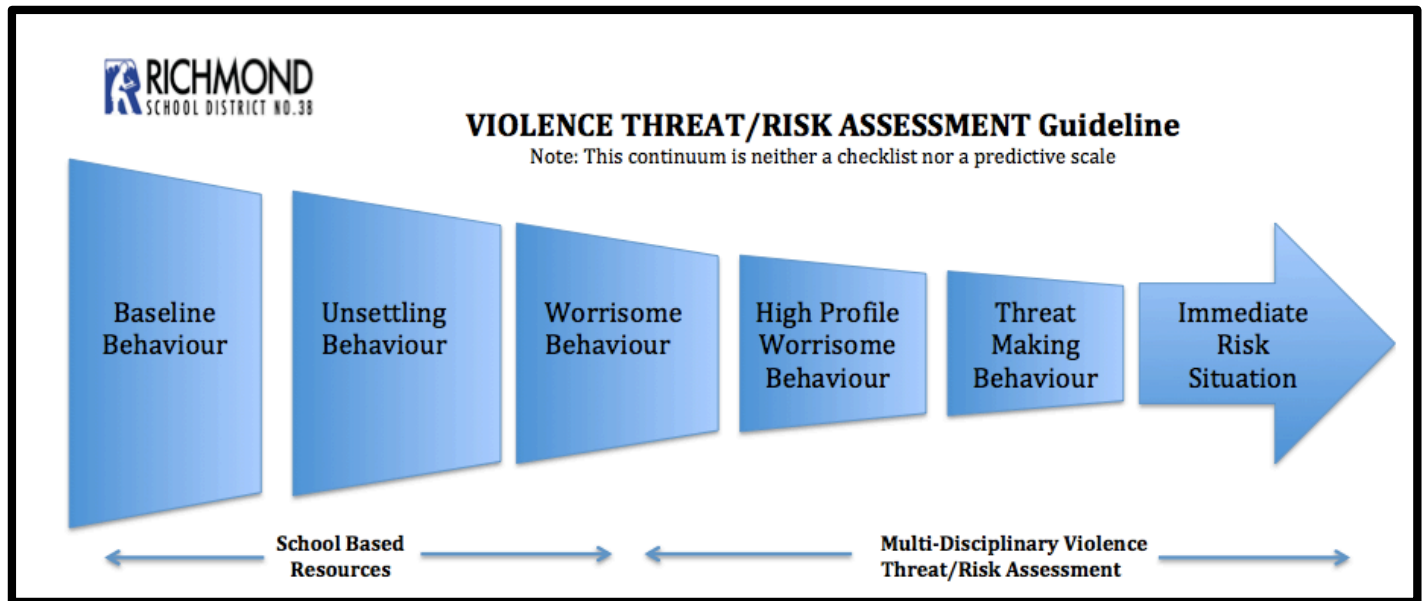
In order to maintain safe and caring school communities, School District #38 has a **Threat Assessment Protocol & Procedures (Richmond) 2010** document that is used to guide our response to threats and threat making behaviours. This protocol is a multi- disciplinary working document between the school district and our community partners and has been signed by the **School District** (Superintendent of Schools), **RCMP** (Officer in Charge, Richmond), **Ministry of Children and Family Development** (Regional Manager, Richmond) and **Mental Health** (Director, Mental Health and Addictions, Richmond).

This protocol is used to assess any potential threat as to its level of concern, determine immediate steps to ensure the safety of all students and staff as well as to develop an appropriate intervention plan that addresses that factors that contributed to the threat and considers the emotional and physical safety of all students, staff and parents in the school community.

Fair Notice: The Richmond School District is committed to creating and maintaining school environments in which students, staff and parents are safe. Therefore, schools in Richmond have a **zero tolerance for not responding** to serious violence or threatening behaviours. Anyone with a plausible concern is expected to report that concern to an appropriate member of staff at the school.