

# Making Ontario's Schools Safer

## What Parents Need to Know

Ontario has a new approach to making schools safer. It focuses on:

- Promoting positive student behaviour
- Providing early and ongoing intervention
- Preventing inappropriate behaviour
- Addressing inappropriate behaviour with appropriate consequences

**This fact sheet tells you what these changes mean for you and your child.**

Ontario has shifted away from an approach that is solely punitive towards **progressive discipline**, a new approach that corrects inappropriate behaviour and offers multiple supports.

### Progressive discipline means:

- Principals will consider the most appropriate way to respond to each situation.
- Students will have more opportunities to learn from the choices they make.
- Parents will be made aware sooner and will have more opportunities to be involved.
- More social workers, counsellors and psychologists will be working with school boards to offer support and counselling to students.

### What is the code of conduct?

Every school board has a code of conduct based on the Provincial Code of Conduct. It promotes respect and sets clear standards of behaviour for the school community.

The code of conduct applies:

- to everyone – students, school staff, parents, community partners and the police.
- at school or school-related events, and to activities that happen outside of school but might have an impact on the school climate. This includes cyberbullying.

### What are schools doing to prevent bullying?

Bullying is a serious issue and is not acceptable on school property, at school activities or online (cyberbullying).

- Students can be suspended from school for bullying, including cyberbullying.
- Every school board has a policy and every school has a plan to help prevent bullying at school.
- Every school has a safe school team. The team includes the principal and at least one student, parent, teacher, support staff member and community partner.
- Parents can find out what to watch for, what to do, and where to get help. This information is available in 22 different languages through your school or on the Ministry of Education website.