

ROYAL VALE SCHOOL

Level of instruction: K to 11

Number of students: 930

Date of GB approval: June 9, 2020

Please note: Due to the current crisis with COVID-19 this plan may be altered during the 2020-2021 school year.

Principal's Signature: _____

Governing Board

Chairperson's Signature: _____

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 (2016)

The English Montreal School Board, E.M.S.B., 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 E.M.S.B.'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 E.M.S.B. Safe Physical and Cyber Environment Policy and the Quebec Education Act, Q.E.A.

At Royal Vale School, we recognize that each child and situation is unique and we strive to ensure that our school is a safe, caring and orderly environment in which to learn and work. The code of conduct at Royal Vale School is based on a balance between rights and responsibilities. Our school expects students, parents/guardians 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 in investigating and ensuring safety for those concerned.

Safe School Team

Our local Safe School Team works to ensure safety and maintain a positive school environment. Our team reviews the Safe School Action plan annually and consists of the following individuals:

- M. Zampini, Principal
- C. Lagakos, Vice-Principal
- Natasha Krsteski, Guidance Counsellor
- Tanya Saad, Special Education Technician (2019-2020)
- Megan Gaspar, Resource Teacher (2019-2020)
- Belinda Magee, Parent/Home and School Coordinator (2019-2020)
- Aaron Prosser, Teacher (2019-2020)
- Sabrina Carroll, Social Worker (2019-2020)
- Paolo Ruscito, Spiritual Animator

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School Climate

Assessing the school climate helps us understand how safe students feel in their environment and allows us to reflect on what improvements we can make to reduce the potential of bullying and violence. We use the following tools to assess the school's climate:

- Informal reports from staff members
- Tell Them From Me Student Survey
- Incident Reports

Based on our data analysis, we have prioritized the following needs in our action plan:

- To continue to implement our code of conduct based on rights and responsibilities
- To provide training of school response procedures to staff
- To implement Kids in the Know as a school program

Prevention

Some of our prevention measures adopted to increase protective factors and educate on issues related to bullying and violence include the following:

- **Focus on age specific topics:**

Elementary

Cycle 1:

- What is a friend
- How to share
- How to speak to others
- What is violence
- How to express your frustration without violence

- It's okay not to always get what you want.
- What is bullying? What is a conflict?
- Appropriate/Inappropriate behaviours
- Labelling feelings
- Going to adults for help
- Expressing emotions

Cycle 2:

- What is friendship
- Differentiating between healthy/unhealthy friendships
- How to speak to others
- What is physical violence
- What is verbal violence
- What is emotional violence
- What is psychological violence
- How to express your frustration without violence
- Appropriate vocabulary
- Appropriate use of internet / social media
- What is bullying? What is a conflict?
- Learning the risks associated with online platforms
- Differentiating between public and private information; caution when sharing online
- Seeking an adult's help when necessary

Cycle 3

- Different forms of violence (continued from cycle 2)
- How to express your frustration without violence
- Appropriate vocabulary
- Appropriate use of internet
- Appropriate use of social media
- How to report social media abuse

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- Consequences of social media
- What is bullying? What is a conflict?
- Differentiating between healthy/unhealthy friendships

High School:

Grades 7-11

- Responsible use of internet
 - Responsible use of social media (picture permanence)
 - Using smart phones safely
 - How to report social media abuse
 - Legal consequences of Bullying
 - Legal consequences of social media abuse
 - What is physical violence
 - What is verbal violence
 - What is emotional violence
 - What is psychological violence
 - What is sexual abuse?
 - What is sexual assault?
 - Respecting ones choices
 - Learning to respect others' boundaries
 - How to get help
 - Differentiating healthy/unhealthy relationships
- **Kids in the Know** is a K to Grade 9 national program. The purpose is to help educators teach children and youth effective personal safety strategies and interactive ways that build resiliency skills and reduce their likelihood of victimization in the online and offline world.

- **RVS Pink Shirt Day, February 2021.** This anti-bullying event not only raises awareness about bullying issues but encourages everyone to practice kindness and wear pink to symbolize that we do not tolerate bullying on this particular day as well as throughout the year.
- **Black History Month** in February celebrates the achievements by African Canadians/Americans and is a time to recognize their central role in our history. An assembly with all grade levels and different activities are planned throughout the month.
- **Royal Vale School's Guidance Counselor** helps develop, maintain and support any initiative the students, staff and administration feel are necessary to prevent bullying and any form of violence.
- **Royal Vale School's Resource Department (resource teacher and child care workers) collaborates with the Special Education Technician** to help provide structured activities for students who need to improve social skills. Together, they work with students at all grade levels who have behavior difficulties that may impede them socially and academically both in and out of the classroom setting.
- **The English Montreal School Board** provides consultants that talk with teachers and students about special needs children and sensitizes them regarding their challenges and differences. They provide strategies as to how to work with them and learn the importance of accepting them. Royal Vale School also offers literature in the library about special needs students.

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- **The Leadership Program** provides opportunities for all grade 6 students to work with kindergarten and Cycle 1 children. The Program empowers Grade 6 students to become role models, assist with conflict resolutions and engage in positive play during recess time. Secondary students also work alongside our elementary students as leaders (e.g. after school peer tutoring program and Math/Science Olympic Games).
- **The Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Greater Montreal Organization** discuss and informs high school students on the topics of: self-esteem and body image, cyber-bullying, communication and conflict resolution, stress management, and abusive relationships. Once a week after school, high school and elementary students spend time getting to know each other and play games/activities in the library.
- **The Collective Community Service** offers a variety of social skills workshop throughout the school year, with our Royal Vale elementary students. The social skills development programs are called the *Friendship Club, Lion's Roar, Transitions to High School, Girls' Group, etc.*
- **Service de Police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM)** provide workshops to elementary and high school students in order to communicate the law as well as to encourage positive changes in their communities and society at large.
- **Guest speakers** are invited to talk with the high school student body in assemblies, class, one-to-one, staff and parents about the many difficult situations and choices teenagers face socially – in and out of school.
- **Mural artists** are invited to help empower students' voices through educational art murals at the elementary and high school level.
- **Tandem** offers elementary students workshops on bullying, Internet security and conflict resolution. These workshops aim to foster empathy, sensitize students to know how to surf the Internet safely and equip children with tools to settle conflicts.

Collaborating with Families

Families are instrumental in helping our school prevent, detect and resolve incidents of bullying and violence. We 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 behaviors in their child/youth.
- Collaborate with school staff in finding solutions if their child is involved in acts of bullying or violence.

Reporting Procedures

- 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 to a trusted adult in the school, etc.).
- Staff members may complete a reporting form to alert the administration to investigate and follow up in a timely fashion.
- Parents/Guardians can report to their child's teacher, school administrator, Special Education Technician in person, with a direct phone call or by email.

Measures to Protect Confidentiality

All cases are treated with the outmost respect and confidentiality. The staff is also trained on confidentiality issues. Documents are kept with the confidential files.

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 behaviors. 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.

Supervisory & Support Measures

Our school supports any student who has been involved in, targeted or affected by bullying behaviors. Some measures that may be put in place include the following:

- Consultation with guidance counselor and other appropriate school professionals.
- Meeting 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 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 the actions as well as any other mitigating factors) and respect legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of students.

In line with the E.M.S.B. Safe Physical and Cyber Environment Policy, the police may be contacted when a criminal act or threat of a criminal act may be involved.

Follow-Up Measures

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

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

For more information or inquiries, please contact:

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Resources:

- <http://www.prevnet.ca/>
- <http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/en/log-in-to-the-positive/>
- www.NeedHelpNow.ca
- <https://www.kidsintheknow.ca/app/en/>
- <https://www.protectchildren.ca/app/en/>
- <https://www.pinkshirtday.ca/>
- <http://fondationjasminroy.com/en/>
- <https://spvm.qc.ca/en/Jeunesse/Bullying>