THAMES VALLEY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
SAFE SCHOOLS CONTINUUM

<u>All</u> students regardless of race, creed, ancestry, colour, ability, gender, gender identification or sexual orientation have the right to a learning environment that will provide for their dignity, respect and safety and where every student can develop positive self-images that will enable them to transcend stereotypes and develop as individuals. A welcoming, caring and safe learning environment for <u>all</u> students is a shared responsibility between staffs, students, and parents and provides the foundation for improving student learning.

STAGE ONE DEVELOPING AWARENESS ≡	STAGE TWO PLANNING AND RESPONDING ≡	STAGE THREE EDUCATING AND LEADING
<u>Overview:</u> At this stage, a school is becoming more aware of its existing culture around issues of Safe Schools. By culture we mean the language that is used, the responses that are made, the values that are transmitted. A Stage One school is taking that first step towards acknowledging the work that will need to be done with respect to moving forward as a Safe School. The school is broadening its understanding of the multiple dimensions of a Safe School	<u>Overview:</u> At this stage, using the feedback from the audits and surveys conducted during Stage One schools will develop protocols and plans. A stage two is responding to what they need to do by providing itself with tools, plans, and presentations with respect to issues of Safe Schools. The school is actively engaged in institutionalizing the multiple dimensions of a Safe School.	<u>Overview:</u> At this stage, a school is regularly teaching its students about the benefits of all of its citizens feeling safe and welcome. The school learns to <u>lead by example</u> when it comes to issues of racism, sexism, homophobia, sexual harassment, prejudice and bullying. Stage Three is the opposite of complacency. Rather, it is a recognition that the maintenance of a safe and welcoming environment is an active, ongoing responsibility to view, review and respond to what is happening in the school combined with a strong sense of responsibility about speaking up within the school and sharing with others beyond the school.

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Activities: The School: The school audits its Code of Conduct, Mission Statement, Vision for inclusive language and compatibility with the Safe Schools provincial legislation and consistency with Thames Valley District School Board Safe Schools policies. • The school audits how consistently the Code of Conduct is enforced by staff and school administration. • The school examines how well it uses its existing vehicles for raising student awareness around issues of school safety. (E.g., Teacher Advisor Program, Health Curriculum, Choices Into Action Policy) • The school reviews its procedures for handling harassment complaints and harassment incidents. (E.g., Is there a hierarchy? Are racial insults, slurs, harassment responded to more vigorously than sexuality slurs, insults, harassment?) • How is bullying defined in your school? What are the target areas of bullying? (E.g., gay students, obese students, disabled students, poor students?) • The lock down procedures are reviewed (Code Yellow, Code Red) regularly. (E.g., Are they understood, posted, practiced? Are the emergency preparedness plans in place?) • The school audits its physical plant for potentially unsafe places. (E.g., is there a hallway that is unsafe for some students.	**Activities:** The School: • The school develops protocols with respect to handling situations while recognizing the importance of balancing protocols with the uniqueness of a particular situation. • The principal makes staff and students aware that every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is an important area to be addressed in the protocols developed; specifically, the school's administrator(s) will identify a trusted adult in each school to whom students can disclose biased activities and hate crimes. • The school encourages the student council to create a position of leadership whose role it will be to heighten student government's awareness of equity issues as they relate to the work of student councils. • The lock down, tornado drills, and safe evacuations of the school are all well communicated, well planned and practiced. • The school implements consistent policies, protocols and Codes of Conduct and trains students, staff, and parents on what these things say and how they will be used. • The Safe School Committee develops plans for prevention, intervention, and aftermath to address issues of racism, sexism, homophobia, sexual harassment, prejudice, etc... • Staff at all levels receive systematic training on how to recognize and de-escalate student situations. • Respectful behaviour is regularly described, modelled, rewarded and recognized.	**Activities:** The School: Anti-hate clubs, Best Buddy clubs are active, high-profile components of the co-curricular life of the school. Multi-cultural celebrations are held annually and are high profile school events. • Solid systems for reporting harassment, bullying and abuse are in place and well understood by all stakeholders. • The school establishes ways of recognizing its own success and celebrating it. (E.g., at staff meetings the principal might choose a support or teaching staff member to recognize for their modelling for kids of what fair play/open-mindedness/tolerance is all about) (E.g., at school recognition assemblies the school works hard at celebrating a broad range of student success). • The school has published its protocols, developed at Stage Two, to be shared with parents and other schools. • The school adopts school-based programs (E.g., Roots of Empathy project, Steps to Respect, Fourth R) which deepen students' understanding of the value of tolerance to communities and which allows them to internalize their behaviour. • The school publishes for its community and other schools the "stories of tolerance" as told in the voices of children and young people. • Anti-violence initiatives are integrated throughout the curriculum. • Staff, students, community volunteer to share their experience and growing expertise with other staff, students and school councils beyond their school.

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Staff/Classroom: • The staff develop an awareness of how inclusive their language is in the classroom and in student assignments. (E.g., family tree assignments, role models, historical figures, hero assignments, etc.) • The staff audits how language is used in classrooms and hallways that may be hurtful or excluding. (E.g., that's so gay, queer, faggot, jew, nigger, 9-11, etc...) • The staff examines how question-friendly the classroom really is. (E.g., Do we work at establishing an environment where it is acceptable for students to ask questions and where we learn to ask and to learn about what we don't understand with respect to diversity of race, creed, colour, disability, etc.) • The staff surveys classroom rules used in the school for the use of inclusive language. • How well do the staff and students know the protocols and policies around issues of bullying, harassment, Code of Conduct infractions? • Staff examine their teaching spaces to determine if there are potentially unsafe places.	**Staff/Classroom:** • Staff implement student class meetings to deal with classroom climate and culture and safety concerns from students' perspective. • Classroom rules are created which are consistent with the school's protocols, policies and Code of Conduct. • New initiatives like classroom question boxes or reward systems for acts of good citizenship are begun. • Student/staff training sessions expand the understanding of what a Safe School is really all about. • Staff meetings are used to share regular updates from committee work. • Staff at all levels, participate in violence prevention in-service sessions and return to the school to train others. • Student groups that promote tolerance are established under the guidance of staff advisors (E.g., anti-hate clubs, buddies, mentors, etc.) • Staff and students can use terminology correctly (racism, homophobia, bullying, etc.) and can recognize the contexts that might lead to violence.	**Staff/Classroom:** • Every staff member knows how to help when a student discloses an experience of harassment, bullying, intolerance. • Teachers have embedded skills and strategies for de-escalating conflict in classrooms and hallways because of regular and on-going training. • As new staff arrive at a school, the staff takes responsibility for ensuring the new staff are brought along in their learning, teaching practices and program strategies. • Coaches or club advisors, as well as classroom teachers, use "teachable moments" to ensure a safe and welcoming environment. • Modelling of non-violent conflict resolution by students and staff is regularly occurring and being discussed. • Teachers are actively engaged in committee work around Safe Schools issues. • In-school P.D. funds are used, at least in part, to keep in-house expertise levels current and rich. • The "R" word, respect, is used by all staff in all classrooms to ensure students are surrounded by messages that are consistent with policies and philosophies of the school. • Teachers openly share the ways they are deliberately becoming inclusive in their assignments for students (E.g., Senior History class might examine what was the impact of all minority votes including the gay vote in the last election). • Teachers regularly assess how well the curriculum acknowledges the identity of all students regardless of creed, colour, race, gender, gender identification.

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Community: • Assess the perceptions of students feelings of physical and emotional safety. • When students are enroute from home to school and school to home, are there issues of safety that regularly present themselves? How are these issues addressed? How well are these protocols understood? • Are there unwritten "rules" for different groups within a school? (E.g., Gay teachers can't coach same gender teams? Muslim girls are not encouraged to try out for teams?) • How do we share and how well do parents understand Safe School policies and procedures?	**Community:** • Student training programs are implemented in partnership with parents and the school community. (Bus safety, street safety, safe teen, abduction proofing initiatives). • Joint school-community partnerships are begun and become a common way of operating committees. (E.g., police officer, shelter representative, etc.) • Elementary to secondary mentoring projects around violence prevention and Safe Schools are begun. • Anti-violence, multi-cultural, assemblies are held. • School Council meetings regularly include updates on the planning that is underway. School Council members give the reports because they are at the planning table. • Meaningful participation in the life of the school by parents and students from all racial, ethnocultural and gender identified groups is welcomed, sought out and encouraged. • Assist staffs with understanding the issues outside the school environment that affect school climate (e.g., employment, housing conditions).	**Community:** • The Family of Schools share School Growth planning initiatives with one another around Safe Schools development. • The broader school community understands and acknowledges that Safe Schools work has a direct correlation with improving student achievement. • When the school is contacted by other school communities for help around violence prevention and Safe Schools, the parents also volunteer to help.

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Resources: • The school audits its human, visual and print resources inside the school and in the larger school community in order to know who and what can be accessed to help a school to learn and to grow with respect to issues of school safety and welcoming environments. A broad range of resources should be considered. • How well does the school staff and community use these resources that are available to them? How do students access them?	**Resources:** • Areas for resource expansion are prioritized. • The resources which were identified at Stage One are made available and publicized. • Community people are invited to share expertise in planned ways in the school. • Invite and access system resources (E.g., Violence Prevention Co-ordinators, kits, library resources). • School planners and posters identify how and where students can get help. • School newsletters, websites, student portal all are used to provide regular Safe Schools information based on current research findings. • Teacher-librarians prioritize purchasing to allow for print and other collections to reflect issues of diversity (E.g., racial, sexual, religious, etc...)	**Resources:** • Resources are regularly used and described to other schools. • Schol libraries have a collection of print and other violence prevention resources which are used regularly by staff and students. • The school can identify age appropriate resources for other schools to consider purchasing.

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