

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
BRIEFING NOTE**

PREPARED FOR: Honourable George Abbott, Minister, for **Information**, at the request of James Gorman, **Deputy Minister**.

SUBJECT: Anti-bullying and Threat Assessment – Prevention and Intervention Strategy

BACKGROUND:

There are still high rates of bullying and serious risks and threats in schools around the world. In BC, there have been a number of serious incidents that involve school aged children where in some incidents warning signs were not recognized, missing an opportunity to provide possible intervention and supports to students, parents, teachers, and administrators.

In BC there are inconsistent policies and practices to deal with incidents of bullying and threat making behaviour.

DISCUSSION:

There is nothing more important than keeping our kids safe. In order to reduce the number of bullying incidents there needs to be a culture shift in our province. The best place to start to model positive behaviours and culture is within our schools. Students must feel safe in order to learn. We must have mechanisms for students who do not feel safe to feel confident in reporting. We need to better support our staff that support kids every day in their classes. We need to ensure staff is trained, understand positive school cultures, and to respond to incidents as they arise.

There is no “one size fits all” model but what is proposed is taken from best practices based on research, evaluation, and lessons learned mainly from Finland, Quebec, and Ontario. The goal is to foster good relationships, recognize behaviours, intervene, and support where necessary.

As identified in BC’s 2011 Speech from the Throne, this initiative will begin to change school cultures and expand existing anti-Bullying policies in schools to include a comprehensive training regime, on-line reporting tools and advanced Threat Assessment tools and protocols.

PROPOSED STRATEGY:

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S13, S17