



Tri-Cities Joint Family Court & Youth Justice Committee

Recommendation Report

December 2012

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Introduction

Bullying has become one of the biggest risk factors that face children and youth, families, schools and the workplace. Children as young as kindergarten can be victims of bullying, witness incidents of bullying or engage in bullying behaviours. Adults are subjected to bully tactics in the workplace and families deal with bully behaviour in the home. The aftermath of bullying behaviour is well researched and undisputed. Without early and successful intervention measures bully behaviour can lead to serious emotional and physical harm against individuals, adversely affect the family structure and further obstruct the building of healthy communities.

Children and families should feel safe and secure at school and in the workplace. Society needs to deal effectively with bullying behaviours and provide necessary resources that support social justice, restore harms done and additionally build public confidence that facilitates and values quality of life. Changing behaviour patterns requires a collaborative effort and greater accountability at the individual level as well as all levels of community and government, including appropriate legal consequences based on the severity of the bully behaviour.

Tri-Cities Family Court and Youth Justice Committee is committed to ensuring the needs of youth and families are met through informational forums and educational series. The recommendations are intended to provide the best outcome for individuals who are impacted by bullying. We are hopeful our report will help others gain a greater understanding of the complexity of bullying and additionally identify the need to amend polices for the benefit of all citizens.

Tri-Cities Family Court and Youth Justice Committee

Recommendations

The committee has divided the recommendations in three parts: Part 1 - deals with schools and community; Part 2 - deals with creating a Database for recording bullying incidents (case documentation) and bullying in the workplace; and Part 3 - deals with the judicial system.

Part 1 - Schools and Community

British Columbia has recently launched the ERASE program which, in part, provides a platform for individuals to report school bullying. Once the report has been filed, the appropriate District Superintendent is notified and subsequently notifies the teacher and/or principal regarding the nature of the complaint. The complaint is handled in accordance to the *individual school's* safe school policy, as determined by the principal, and carried out by the teacher and/or principal. If unresolved, the complaint may be heard by the District Superintendent and if necessary, the School Trustees.

Ontario, Nova Scotia and Quebec have adopted a province wide safe school policy whereby each school, regardless of their location or size, is required to follow the same standard of care when reporting and handling incidents of bullying. A provincial wide approach provides a reliable and transparent process for students, parents and educators to follow. It helps to manage challenging situations and provides assurances that a complaint will be handled in accordance to standard policy.

The committee encourages the Ministry of Education and Minister of Justice to consider the following recommendations:

1. Adopt a provincial wide Safe School Policy and Practices Guide
2. Assign appropriate resources and reasonable timelines to meet Safe School objectives
3. Establish Focus Groups to build safe and caring communities
4. Develop a process to record types of bullying and rate severity of the bullying behaviour
5. Design and implement an ongoing evaluation process

1. Adopt a province wide Safe School Policy and Practices Guide

Adopt a provincial wide *Save School Policy and Practice Guide* that applies to students, educators, admin and independent contractors, such as bus drivers and independent case workers/managers. Include a *Code of Conduct* in all school districts built with student participation to establish a due diligence process that deals with bullying and other social issues. Establish a minimum standard of care with core values that focus on social responsibility.

2. Assign appropriate resources and reasonable timelines to meet Safe School objectives

1) Initial and ongoing training:

- a) Professional Days (designate minimum hours per year) for training/workshops for Principals, Teachers and Admin that include, but are not limited to:
 - i) Prevention and intervention strategies regarding bullying

- ii) Identifying various types of bully behaviour, including cyber bullying
 - iii) Interaction strategies to support victim (target), bystanders and bully
 - iv) Interaction strategies to support parents
 - v) Teaching and reinforcement of positive social behaviour
- b) Teacher-training for pre-grad/university students to address bully awareness and intervention measures as part of the university curriculum.
 - c) Support and implement peer to peer anti-bullying training programs for youth such as Red Cross – *Beyond the Hurt* program.

3. Establish Focus Groups to build safe and caring communities

- 1) Establish focus groups to build safe and caring communities:
 - a) Elementary, middle and high school students
 - b) Educators and admin, including bus drivers (as adopted by Nova Scotia)
 - c) Parents and/or parent advisory groups

4. Develop a process to record types of bullying and rate the severity of the behaviour

- 1) Develop a process to record bullying incidents at the individual school level to:
 - a) Establish specific categories to identify bullying behaviour. Examples may include verbal bullying, pushing and shoving, physical assault, cyber bullying
 - b) Establish a rating system to indicate the severity of the bullying. Examples may include verbal bullying (Rate 4), pushing and shoving (Rate 5), physical assault (Rate 9), cyber bullying (Rate 10)
 - c) Assure appropriate measures are taken to avoid duplicate reporting (ie incidents reported at individual school and ERASE – possibly counted as two incidents)
 - d) Monitor and store data for research, evaluation and publication
 - e) Measure outcomes of restorative justice

5. Design and implement an ongoing evaluation process

- 1) Design and implement an ongoing evaluation process that provides oversight and review including:
 - a) The process to report bullying incidents
 - b) How to categorize various types of bullying behaviour
 - c) How to rate the severity of the bullying incidents
 - d) Feedback from focus groups
 - e) Measuring effectiveness of training programs
 - f) Measuring effectiveness of restorative justice strategies

Part 2 – Create a Database; Case Documentation and Bullying in the Workplace

1. Create a Database to document Bullying incidents

Acts of bullying are handled through the court system; however, they are documented as assault, family violence, property damage and other crimes. The underlying cause of these crimes often comes from a history of bullying behaviour. Currently, case documentation (BC) may not include or specify acts of bullying. Without this identification, it is difficult to assess how many cases of assault, family violence and other crimes are actually taking place as a result of bullying behaviour.

The committee recommends that cases which include acts of bullying be appropriately identified as such. This information is beneficial when documenting bullying incidents that involve offenses under the Criminal Code or Youth Criminal Justice Act. It provides valuable crime statistics for police, municipalities, government agencies, and the general public to develop strategies and programs for prevention and also helps to analyze the success of programs over time.

2. Bullying in the Workplace

Acknowledging that bully behaviour exists in the workplace is a positive first step. Anti-bullying programs will provide education for employers and employees, however, issues such as protecting the privacy of an individual who files a complaint, assurances that a complaint will not affect the individual's relationship or status in the workplace, fair evaluation of work performance, salary increase or bonuses, and the legitimacy of dismissing an employee for valid reasons will all be under greater scrutiny. Some cases will be played out in the legal system and may cause further hardship, loss of wages and damage to one's reputation – either employer or employee.

The committee recommends the following for consideration:

- Implement privacy policies to protect all parties
- Develop an awareness campaign to help educate the public regarding both employer and employee rights pertaining to bullying in the workplace.
- Develop and implement a standard level of care and due diligence process for handling cases of bullying that is available to anyone in the workplace
- Implement intervention strategies, such as a restorative justice approach or mediation
- Adopt a reasonable evaluation process to measure outcomes
- Anonymous reporting through WorkSafe BC

Part 3 - The Judicial System

1. Bullying and the Law

JFCYJC recognizes that laws exist; however, the law as outlined in the Criminal Code & Youth Criminal Justice Act is punitive and applied only after the offense has been committed. An act of bullying may also be dealt with through Civil Court where a monetary settlement is paid to the victim in the event damages have been proven. Civil Court also takes place after the damage has already been done.

Bullying behaviour is specific and intentional. Research shows that without early intervention bullying behaviours continue and the severity of the bullying escalates. It can start before school age, build during the school years and become a way of behaving in a workplace. The behaviours and negative consequences need to be acknowledged within the legal system and appropriate legal consequences clearly outlined for various behaviours.

The committee recommends a restorative justice approach be given serious consideration. Restorative justice offers mediation, accountability and meaningful resolution for all parties. It recognizes the harm done and works with the individuals or groups to achieve an acceptable outcome.

A restorative justice approach significantly reduces the costs of adjudication. Typically each court case involves the police, Crown, Judge, clerical, admin and possibly probation costs. In 2009 The Victoria Times Colonist reported that the estimated cost of a typical youth case is \$8,000. In comparison, a typical restorative justice case averages \$1,000. In addition to the cost-effectiveness of restorative justice, the courts are dealing with a backlog of cases. The recent case in Ontario involving the Hell's Angels serves as an example of how the backlog is clogging up the system and public safety may be compromised. The more serious cases are being dismissed while cases that would benefit from a restorative justice approach continue to be handled at the judicial level. CERA (Communities Embracing Restorative Action, serving the Tri-Cities) reports the average timeline per case, from referral to conclusion, is 32 days.

A restorative justice approach may take in a cash restitution which can be applied elsewhere and weeds out cases that are spurious in nature. For these reasons, restorative justice needs to be applied to those cases where positive behaviours and relationships can be restored.

The laws were established at a time when the internet, Facebook, Twitter and cyberbullying did not exist. The lack of empathy and accountability for one's actions in today's society is largely unchallenged. The committee recognizes that laws are not, and should not, be amended without due care; however, the committee also feels the escalation and severity of bullying behaviour has become extreme. As a result we are seeing extreme outcomes such as teen suicides, gang rapes captured on cell phones, swarming, assault and even murder – offenses either directly or indirectly tied to bullying behaviour.

The Criminal Code of Canada recognizes that bullying is an offense and defines the law related to threatening death or bodily harm stating:

- Everyone commits an offence who, in any manner knowingly utters, conveys or causes any person to receive a threat, to cause death or bodily harm to any person
- Bodily harm means any hurt or injury to a person that interferes with the health or comfort of the person and that is more than merely transient or trifling in nature
- Bodily harm includes psychological hurt or injury, as well as physical
- The threat does not have to be directed at a particular person, but simply an ascertainable or identifiable group
- Conditional and future threats are included

Declaration of the Youth Criminal Justice Act states:

The objectives of the youth justice system are to prevent crime; rehabilitate and reintegrate young persons into society; and ensure meaningful consequences for offences. In these ways, the system can contribute to the long-term protection of society.

The underlying principle of the Youth Criminal Justice Act is focused on prevention and rehabilitation; however, if this intention is to be realized, a restorative justice approach, rather than a punitive approach, should be applied to those cases where the severity of the bullying does not warrant a harsher penalty. Research has shown that this intervention strategy may deter bullying behaviour and improve the social relationships of all parties involved.

The committee recommends a review of current law to determine the rationality of amending the law to include acts of bullying and to further include a restorative justice approach, where appropriate, as a legal consequence for the offense.

1. Review of the Criminal Code

- 1) Amend the existing laws to include specific acts of bullying, including electronic means such as cyberbullying
- 2) Assign appropriate consequences (penalties and punishment) for specific acts of bullying
- 3) Include a restorative justice approach where appropriate

2. Review of the Youth Criminal Justice Act

- 1) Apply amended laws to include specific acts of bullying, including electronic means such as cyberbullying
- 2) Apply appropriate consequences (penalties and punishment) for severe acts of bullying
- 3) Include a restorative justice approach where appropriate

3. Adopt a policy to identify “bullying” in case documentation

- 1) To be used to accurately measure acts of bullying
- 2) To assist in identifying overlap of crime, particularly chronic assault and family violence cases
- 3) To measure effectiveness of a restorative justice approach

Background

On October 24, 2012, the Joint Family Court and Youth Justice Committee held a forum on bullying to provide the community with education, information and specific action steps regarding bullying. The committee partnered with the Red Cross who provided their documentary film “How to Help: A Youth Perspective on Bullying.” A panel of seven experts shared their knowledge and research concerning the complexities of the issue. In sponsoring this initiative, the committee gained a greater understanding of how bullying behaviour impacts individuals, schools, homes, the workplace and a community.

The Definition: Acts of Bullying

Bullying is a form of aggression in which there is an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim. The bully (or bullies) is always more powerful than the victim (or victims). Bullying can be physical, verbal and/or psychological. It can be direct (face to face) or indirect (behind someone's back). Indirect bullying includes exclusion and gossip. (Pepler, Craig & Rona, 2000).

The key elements of bullying are:

- Power imbalance
- Bully's intent to harm
- Victim's distress
- Repeated over time (reputations and power differential become consolidated).

Cyberbullying is also a form of bullying. Communication and information technology allows for bullying to occur anywhere – while youth are at school, at home or in the community. Cyberbullying refers to the use of information and communication technologies (email, cell phones, pager text messages, internet sites, instant messaging) to physically threaten, verbally harass or socially exclude an individual or group. Using these technologies to distribute damaging messages and pictures allows bullies to remain anonymous and their harassment to become widespread (Cyberbullying.ca).

Cyberbullying is its own category of bullying. It may not involve an element of power imbalance. This was recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada in the recent case of *A.B. v Bragg Communication Inc.*, 2012 SCC 46, in which the court, adopted the following statement of the Report of the *Nova Scotia Task Force on Bullying and Cyberbullying (2012)*, at paragraph (22). The Report also noted that cyberbullying can be particularly harmful because the content can be spread widely, quickly and anonymously.

Paragraph (22:) The immediacy and broad reach of modern electronic technology has made bullying easier, faster, more prevalent, and crueller than ever before.

....cyberbullying follows you home and into your bedroom; you can never feel safe, it is "non-stop bullying"....cyberbullying is particularly insidious because it invades the home where children normally feel safe, and it is constant and inescapable because the victims can be reached at all times and in all places.

The anonymity available to cyberbullies complicates the picture further as it removes the traditional requirement for a power imbalance between the bully and victim, and makes it difficult to provide the identity of the perpetrator. Anonymity allows people who might not otherwise engage in bullying behaviour the opportunity to do so with less chance of repercussion.

The cyber-world provides bullies with a vast unsupervised public playground.

Cyberbullying is a relatively new phenomenon that provides infinite opportunities for bullies to antagonize victims. It perpetuates a public environment to humiliate, embarrass or diminish an individual with little accountability. Its sneering effects are so destructive that individuals are left feeling completely helpless to undo the damage done to them.

General Overview

There are three components to bullying: the bully, the victim and the bystander.

1. The Bully

Children who bully have not learned pro-social ways to resolve their interpersonal conflicts and frustrations. They need help to change their interpersonal patterns before they become deeply ingrained (Craig, Peters & Konarski, 1998; Fox et al, 2003; Haynie et al., 2001). Children who continue to bully can later suffer psychological problems such as externalizing problems (conduct disorders), aggressive tendencies, and occasionally depressive symptoms (Harris, Petrie, and Willoughby, 2002; Artz & Nicholson, 2002; Pepler & Craig, 2000).

Research has shown the progression of bully behaviour in children escalates to higher forms of aggression in youth and adults. "Bullying is a problem throughout the life span. Children do not just grow out of it. Children who learn how to acquire power through aggression on the playground may transfer these lessons to sexual harassment, dating violence, gang attacks, marital abuse, child abuse and elder abuse" (Pepler & Craig 2000).

Bullying behaviour, as with other forms of violent behaviour, continues outside of the school environment and potentially throughout an individual's life unless there is adequate intervention (Pepler & Craig, 2000; Rigby, Smith & Pepler, 2004). Left unchecked, a five-year-old who displays bullying behaviours will likely exhibit similar behaviours later in life. Bullying during childhood is closely associated with future antisocial behaviour in adolescence and adulthood (Craig, Peters & Konarski, 1998). Other studies reveal that children who bullied in grades six to nine are six times more likely to have a criminal record by the age of 24, (Olweus, 1993). As adults, children who bully may display harassment in the workplace or may commit spousal, child, or senior abuse (Craig & Pepler, 2000; Rigby, 2003).

2. The Victim

Society should not accept bullying as a normal part of growing up. Bullying behavior does not go away on its own and requires immediate intervention to stop the bully behavior. Without adequate intervention, a bully who is caught bullying often stops the behavior towards that specific victim (or target), but soon finds a new victim (or target) to fulfill his/her need for power or control or to act out their own feelings of inadequacy.

Victims may experience physical attacks such as hitting, kicking and spitting (assault), verbal name calling, uttering of threats, humiliation, social exclusion and cyberbullying. All forms of bullying have similar impacts on the victim. Child victims can experience psychological trauma that affect their physical health, (symptoms include headaches and stomach aches) as well as their emotional well being (symptoms include, but are not limited to depression, anxiety, sadness and low self-esteem).

Depending on the situation, some individuals who are victimized as children report psychological harm into adulthood including continued distress, self-blame, fear, and

internalized problems, such as depression (Craig, Peters & Konarski, 1998; Glover, Gough, Johnson & Cartwright, 2000; Haynie et al., 2001; Pepler & Craig, 2000; Smith, 2000; Wilke, n.d.).

The stress of coping with bullying incidents can have catastrophic consequences that may lead to suicide, alcohol and substance abuse, isolation and mental health disorders. Dealing with such conditions eventually places an enormous strain on community resources and family members.

3. The Bystanders

Research shows that bystanders also feel victimized when witnessing acts of bullying. Feelings of helplessness can be overwhelming and bystanders often side with the bully in an attempt to prevent personal harm or minimize negative feelings from witnessing the abuse. Similar to victims, bystanders may internalize the impact of the incident(s) resulting in feelings of guilt and inadequacy that may continue into adulthood. Bystanders can have the greatest impact on bullying behaviour by implementing simple intervention tools and strategies.

There is another category of bystander who is culpable as an offender. In this case, the bystander(s) incites the bully to continue the behaviour by facilitating and encouraging the bullying behaviour. If the bystander provokes others into committing the assault, the bystander is a perpetrator of the bullying, rather than a victim or target. If the bullying incident takes on the form of a physical assault, a bystander may be found liable even if they did not participate directly or strike any blows.

Bullying Behaviours

Bully behaviour often results from a bullying experience(s). Many bullies deny their involvement as a bully and therefore intervention strategies must be specific for the bully and individual circumstance. There are complex and historical factors to consider and research has proven that simple solutions, such as imposing a punishment, are not effective. In a brief submitted to "The Alberta Round Table on Family Violence and Bullying," the City of Calgary adopted the following statement as their guiding principal.

The complex nature of bullying demands comprehensive approaches. Multiple, rather than single isolated factors, place children at risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of violence. Bullying is a community issue and as such is best managed by school personnel in collaboration with parents, police, business leaders, elected officials and young people themselves. To be effective, interventions must address multiple risk factors in a variety of settings. Simplistic, quick fix methods such as the implementation of a by-law are not proven to be successful.

Parents, educators, students and community organizations must all work in collaboration in order to resolve bullying. Regardless of the current status (bully or victim), early prevention measures are critical to changing the behaviour pattern of a bully. Over time and without a positive intervention, problematic cases present a potential risk to new victims and/or the community through property crime and eventually more violent crimes.

Although JFCYJC has focused on bullying in the schools the issue of bullying in the workplace is also a concern. This type of bullying can cause physical, mental and emotional stress to the victim and may lead to absenteeism, low productivity and mental disorders. Employees endure hardships that may fall

below basic employment standards yet continue to tolerate bullying behaviour for various personal and economic reasons.

Elements of bullying are reflected in other areas such as spousal abuse, child abuse and elder abuse. The destructive aftermath of persistent bullying behaviour is evident and many families deal with the negative affects in isolation.

Schools are enhancing safe school policies, various levels of governments are implementing awareness and prevention programs and other community initiatives are providing tools and resources to help children and families deal with individual situations. The primary focus has been on prevention strategies; however, the recent and tragic suicide of Amanda Todd has highlighted the need for greater education and bully awareness programs. It has also highlighted the absence of adequate support services and justice for both victims and bullies.

Conclusion

The complexity of bullying has far reaching and long lasting implications. Tri-Cities Joint Family Court and Youth Justice Committee (JFCYJC) is in support of stronger anti-bullying prevention strategies in an effort to combat the growing and undesirable effects of bullying in schools, the home, the workplace and throughout the community.

On behalf of the Tri-Cities Joint Family Court and Youth Justice Committee members, we thank you for consideration regarding our recommendation. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Respectfully Submitted:

Tri-Cities Family Court and Youth Justice Committee

Appendix

Terms of Reference:

Family Court and Youth Justice Committee For the cities of Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Coquitlam and the Villages of Anmore and Belcarra (Revised 2006)

Establishment and Authority

The Joint Family/Court Youth Justice Committee (JFCYJC) is essentially composed of two separate committees - the Family Court Committee and the Youth Justice Committee - created under two separate Acts which are, respectively, Section 5 of the Provincial Court Act and Section 18 of the Youth Criminal Justice Act. These sections read as follows:

Family Court Committee

The Provincial Court Act, Section 5, establishes the Joint Family Court Committee.

s.5 (1) A municipality must have a family court committee appointed by the municipal council in January of each year.

(2) The members of a family court committee must include persons with experience in education, health, probation or welfare.

(3) The members of a family court committee serve without remuneration.

(4) If a court facility in which family matters are dealt with serves more than one municipality or area not in a municipality, the family court committee must be composed of representatives from each area served.

(5) The municipalities involved must appoint one member of the family court committee as chair, and another as vice chair.

(6) The family court committee must do the following:

(a) meet at least 4 times a year to consider and examine the resources of the community for family and children's matters, to assist the court when requested and generally, and to make the recommendations to the court, the Attorney General or others it considers advisable;

(b) assist the officers and judges of the court, if requested, to provide a community resource or assistance in individual cases referred to the committee;

(c) report annually to the municipalities involved and to the Attorney General respecting their activities during the past year.

Youth Justice Committees

18. (1) The Attorney General of Canada or a province or any other minister that the lieutenant governor in council of the province may designate may establish one or more committees of citizens, to be known as youth justice committees, to assist in any aspect of the administration of this Act or in any programs or services for young persons.

(2) The functions of a youth justice committee may include the following:

(a) in the case of a young person alleged to have committed an offence,

(i) giving advice on the appropriate extrajudicial measure to be used in respect of the young person,

(ii) supporting any victim of the alleged offence by soliciting his or her concerns and facilitating the reconciliation of the victim and the young person,

- (iii) ensuring that community support is available to the young person by arranging for the use of services from within the community, and enlisting members of the community to provide short-term mentoring and supervision, and
- (iv) when the young person is also being dealt with by a child protection agency or a community group, helping to coordinate the interaction of the agency or group with the youth criminal justice system;
- (b) advising the federal and provincial governments on whether the provisions of this Act that grant rights to young persons, or provide for the protection of young persons, are being complied with;
- (c) advising the federal and provincial governments on policies and procedures related to the youth criminal justice system;
- (d) providing information to the public in respect of this Act and the youth criminal justice system;
- (e) acting as a conference; and
- (f) any other functions assigned by the person who establishes the committee.

Composition Representatives to the Committee, as determined by the Committee, are appointed for two year periods.

Voting Members*

- ☑ City of Coquitlam (six voting members)
- ☑ City of Port Coquitlam (three voting members)
- ☑ City of Port Moody (three voting members)
- ☑ Village of Anmore (two voting members)
- ☑ Village of Belcarra (two voting members)
- ☑ Electoral Area “B” (two voting members)

*Voting Members are defined as appointed citizens and/or city councilors.

Associate Members: Associate members are non-voting members that provide important information on services, legislation, policy, emerging issues and community needs that help guide the business of the committee. These organizations will be comprised of government agencies and community based service providers as determined by the committee. Associate members are encouraged to sit on any or all subcommittees and take part in all committee discussions. While associate members are non-voting members at the level of the committee of the whole, they are entitled to vote at the sub-committee level. Associate members could include but are not limited to:

- ☑ Senior Probation Officer
- ☑ Share Society Representative
- ☑ Ministry of Children and Family Development
- ☑ RCMP
- ☑ Port Moody Police Department
- ☑ Coquitlam School District 43
- ☑ Clerk to the Family Court Committee (a position shared by the Municipalities on a rotating basis) (Port Coquitlam 1999, 2002, 2005, etc.)

Duties and Responsibilities

The committee will meet at least (6) times a year:

The ongoing duties and responsibilities, which are set by the Committee include the following:

- ☑ To provide information and educate the public on issues related to Family Court and Youth Criminal Justice Issues.

☒ To consider, examine and review changes to the resources and services of the community for family, children and youth as pertaining to family court, youth justice and crime prevention issues as required or requested.

☒ To increase the Committee's visibility within the community, such that it is recognized as an appropriate body to whom recommendations can be proposed to improve, create or eliminate legislation, policies or programs serving families and/or children.

☒ To review and analyze legislation, policies and programs concerning family, youth justice and crime prevention issues and make recommendations to the appropriate legislative or implementing bodies.

☒ To assist the court when requested and generally, and to make the recommendations to the court, the Attorney General or others it considers advisable;

☒ To assist the officers and judges of the court, if requested, to provide a community resource or assistance in individual cases referred to the committee;

☒ To report annually to the municipalities involved and to provide a copy to the Attorney General respecting their activities during the past year.

In studying the needs of families and children, the committee endeavors to assist in seeing that these needs are met; to understand legislation, policies and programs as they relate to those needs in the community, and to provide considered opinions and recommendations to the Municipal Councils, the Attorney-General, and others as it may be considered advisable.

Each member of the Committee should be:

☒ Aware of the mandate of the Family Court Committee/Youth Justice Committee, how the district committee has interpreted the mandate, and be prepared to give time and energy so that the Committee will be effective.

☒ An active participant in the affairs of one or more standing committees.

☒ Continually watchful as to the welfare of the children and youth involved in justice, protection, divorce and custody systems.

☒ Involved in discussions, workshops, and visitations to facilities and in communication with other family court committees.

Termination of term of office:

If a committee member misses more than three consecutive meetings without cause or notification, the committee may recommend to the appointing body to terminate the appointment. Time permitting a replacement member may be appointed to the committee.

Procedures:

Meeting dates, times and locations are determined prior to the start of the new session, The location of the meeting rotates to the Municipality providing the secretarial duties on an annual basis.

A quorum is four members. The vote of the majority is the vote of the committee. Procedure is followed as described by Robert's Rules.