



Date: January 29, 2025 **Agenda Item:** 8.3

To: Board of Trustees

From: Shawna Warren, Superintendent

Originator(s): Jonathan Konrad, Deputy Superintendent, Education Services
Shelley Greenwood, Director of Learning Services

Subject: **Supporting Safe and Respectful Learning Environments**

Background:

The Board of Trustees, as stated in the Education Act, section 33 (1), “as a partner in education, has the responsibility to:

d) ensure that each student enrolled in a school operated by the board and each staff member employed by the board is provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging”.

The Supporting Safe and Respectful Learning Environments Report provides an overview of the Division’s system-wide approach to fostering positive student behaviour and conduct. This approach emphasizes proactive, restorative, and collaborative strategies to ensure that all students and staff experience a welcoming, caring, and safe environment conducive to learning and growth.

Status & Relationship to Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard (SLQS):

This report aligns with the [SLQS](#) in the following way:

- COMPETENCY:** (1) Building Effective Relationships
- INDICATORS:**
- a. collaborating with community and provincial agencies to address the needs of students and their families;
 - b. employing team-building strategies and using solution focused processes to resolve challenges;
 - e. establishing constructive relationships with students, staff, school councils, parents/guardians, employee organizations, the education ministry and other stakeholder organizations; and
 - f. facilitating the meaningful participation of members of the school community and local community in decision-making.

- COMPETENCY:** (2) Modeling Commitment to Professional Learning
INDICATORS: c. promoting in the school community a common understanding of and support for the school authority's goals, priorities and strategic initiatives.
- COMPETENCY:** (4) Leading Learning
INDICATORS: a. fostering in the school community equality and respect with regard to rights as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*;
b. providing learning opportunities, based on research informed principles of effective teaching, learning and leadership, to support building the capacity of all members of the school community to fulfill their educational roles; and
e. ensuring that staff have access to resources, programs and expertise to support them in meeting their professional responsibilities and in addressing the learning needs of all students.
- COMPETENCY:** (6) School Authority Operations and Resources
INDICATORS: e. establishing data-informed strategic planning and decision-making processes that are responsive to changing contexts.
- COMPETENCY:** (7) Supporting Effective Governance
INDICATORS: b. ensuring that all students and staff are provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging;
d. ensuring that the board's plans, resource allocations, strategies and procedures lead to the achievement of its goals and priorities;
f. supporting the board in the fulfilment of its governance functions in the fiduciary, strategic and generative realms; and
h. ensuring the support, ongoing supervision and evaluation of all staff members in relation to their respective professional responsibilities.

Governance Implications:[Education Act](#)

Board responsibilities

33(1) A board, as a partner in education, has the responsibility to

d) ensure that each student enrolled in a school operated by the board and each staff member employed by the board is provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.

[Policy 110: Welcoming Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Environments](#)

The Board believes in the importance of, and is committed to, establishing, and maintaining a welcoming, inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.

The Board believes that all members of the school community, including students, staff members, and community members, have the right to learn, work and volunteer in environments that respect: equity, diversity, inclusion, and human rights. Such environments create the conditions where everyone can prosper.

[Policy 900: Student Conduct and Discipline](#)

The Board believes that each student and staff member has the right to learn and work in an environment that promotes: equity, diversity, inclusion and human rights.

The Board believes that to maintain a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning and working environment, students must attend school regularly, be punctual, diligent in their studies, and be respectful and considerate to everyone in the school community.

The Board believes that parents and guardians are partners in education and expects that they will support the schools in ensuring a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe working and learning environment.

[Administrative Procedure 901: Student Conduct](#)

Sturgeon Public Schools recognizes its responsibility to maintain a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning and working environment in schools.

Administration is prepared to respond to questions at the January 29, 2025, Public Board meeting.

Attachment(s):

1. Supporting Safe and Respectful Learning Environments Report



Supporting Safe and Respectful Learning Environments

January 2025

Presented to the Board of Trustees

Jonathan Konrad, Deputy Superintendent

Shelley Greenwood, Director of Learning Services

BACKGROUND

Our Vision

Sturgeon Public School Division: where, through a well-rounded education, students are motivated and supported to pursue their unique path to future success.

Sturgeon Public Schools, as per the *Education Act*, Policy 110 and Policy 900, is committed to maintaining a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging. This report outlines how these commitments are operationalized through discipline practices, interventions like Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools (TCIS), and data-driven decision-making.

Code of Conduct

Section 33 of *the Education Act*, establishes the requirement for a Code of Conduct for all students. All schools develop a Code of Conduct, applicable to individual school needs (age, grades, etc.). These Codes of Conduct are established under Administrative Procedure (AP) [901: Student Conduct](#).

Each school is required to:

- Develop a written School Code of Student Conduct consistent with Board Policy 900 Student Conduct and Discipline and in consultation with students, parents/guardians, the School Council and staff. The School Code of Student Conduct shall be reviewed annually with any revisions communicated to the Deputy Superintendent Education Services.
 - Make copies of the School Code of Student Conduct available to students, parents/guardians and staff, on the school's website and in print if requested.
 - Review the School Code of Student Conduct with the School Council annually.
 - Review the School Code of Student Conduct with all students annually.
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Student Discipline

AP 901: Student Conduct outlines the procedures for discipline, including suspension and expulsion, in accordance with **Policy 900**. The primary purpose of discipline is to foster safe and respectful learning environments conducive to student success.

The following principles guide disciplinary actions:

- A. Discipline focuses on learning and growth, not punishment. It is preferred to teach students positive behaviours rather than impose rules about what not to do.
- B. Student safety is paramount; decisions and actions may require careful consideration and time.
- C. Parents or guardians are informed about disciplinary actions involving their child while ensuring the privacy of others.
- D. Corrective discipline maintains the dignity of all students and is conducted privately when possible.
- E. School and division codes of conduct are written positively to emphasize expectations and values.
- F. All disciplinary actions take into account the unique needs and circumstances of each student, including special needs, as outlined in **AP 901: Procedure 11**.

Disciplinary Actions

Discipline at Sturgeon Public Schools emphasizes corrective learning that builds foundational behaviours and habits contributing to individual success and well-being. Interventions may include:

- Teaching problem-solving skills;
- Increased supervision or monitoring;
- Restorative practices;
- Temporary removal of privileges;
- Behavioural contracts or positive behaviour support plans;
- Counselling or pro-social skills training;
- Referrals to external agencies or supports; and
- Additional assessment or support services, as needed.

Suspension

Suspension procedures align with **Policy 900 (Section 3.9)** and the **Education Act**. As per **AP 901 (Procedures 12.8-12.11)**, suspensions may include:

- Suspension from riding the school bus;
- Suspension from a specific class by a teacher;





- Suspension from school-related activities; or
- Suspension from school for up to five (5) days by the principal.

Suspensions are formally documented and communicated to parents. The Division office tracks suspensions for consistency, analysis of trends, and improvements to procedures.

Discipline Hearings and Expulsion

The *Education Act* and PSD Procedure allow for a **Discipline/Expulsion Hearing**. Under section 37(1) of the *Education Act*, the Board may expel the student if:

- The student has displayed an attitude of willful, blatant, and repeated refusal to comply with section 31;
- The student has displayed an attitude of willful, blatant, and repeated refusal to comply with the Code of Conduct established under Section 33;
- The student's conduct, whether or not the conduct occurs within the school building or during the school day, is injurious to the physical or mental well-being of others in the school;

Discipline Hearings are established under **Policy 900: Student Conduct** and **Policy 230: Appendix B - Student Discipline Committee**.

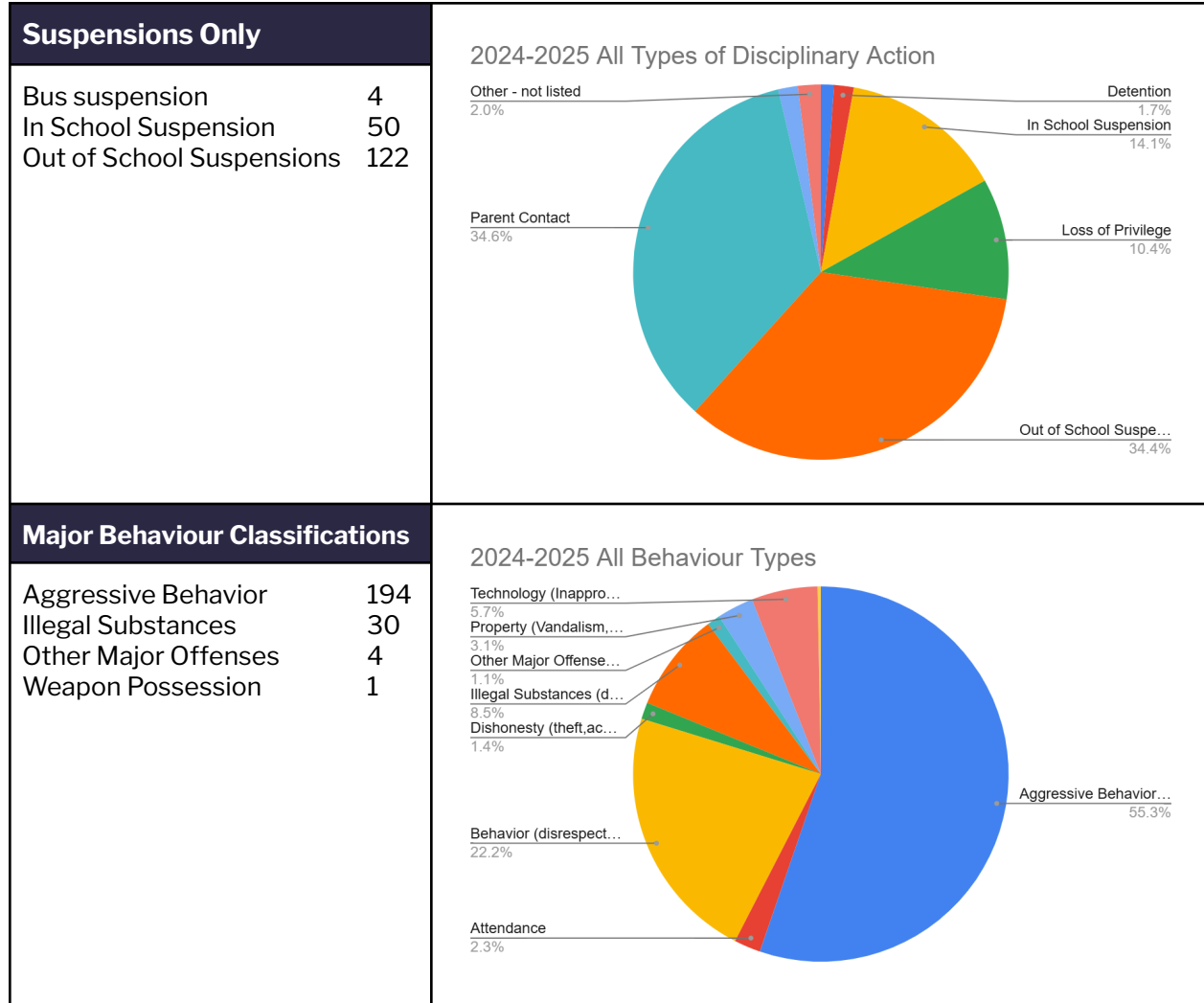




STUDENT DISCIPLINE DATA AND TRENDS

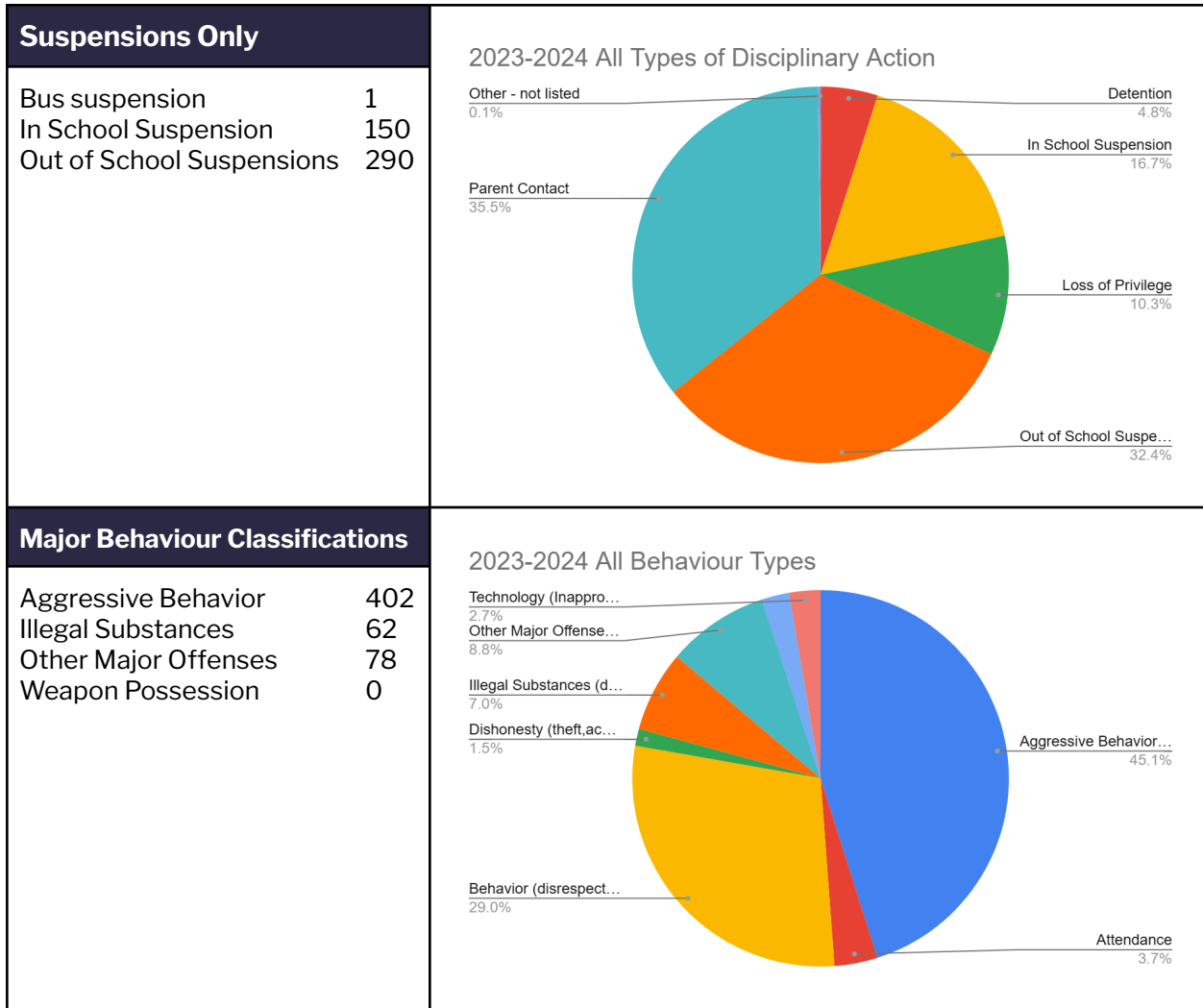
Suspensions and Other Discipline

2024 - 2025 (Up to November 29, 2024)

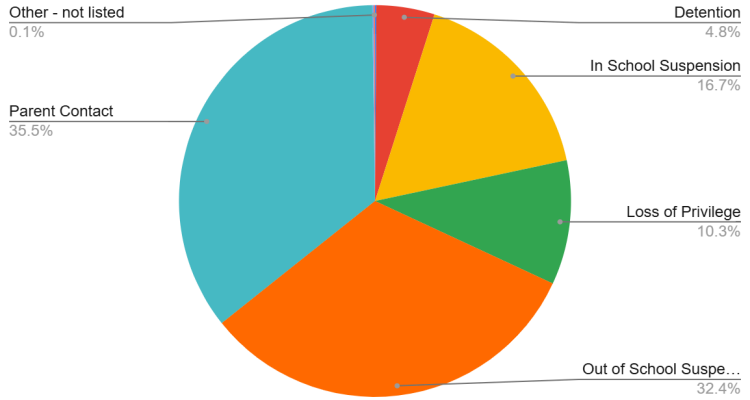




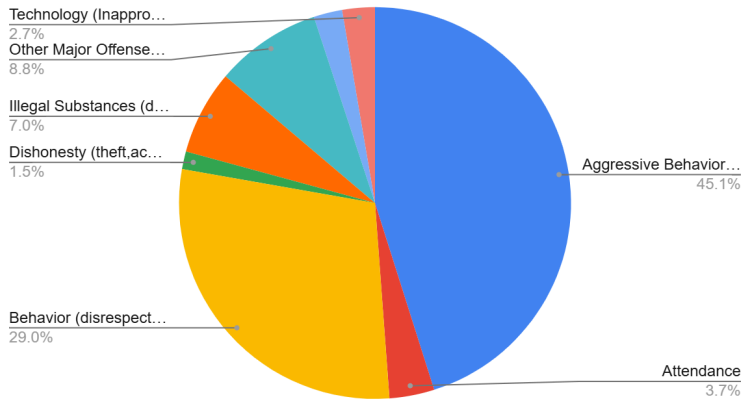
2023 - 2024



2023-2024 All Types of Disciplinary Action



2023-2024 All Behaviour Types



Discipline Hearings and Expulsion

So far in 2024 - 2025, two (2) Discipline Hearings have been conducted, and in 2023 - 2024, two (2) were conducted, which was down from four (4) in 2022 - 2023. All hearings in the past three years have been for significant Aggressive Behaviours.





ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION

Violent Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Protocol

Sturgeon Public Schools uses the **VTRA Protocol** to assess and address risks collaboratively, involving community partners like Child and Family Services and the RCMP.

The purpose of VTRA is to promote a common language and understanding of threat assessment, make use of the expertise of community partners, and encourage a multidisciplinary approach to violence prevention. **It is important to note that the VTRA process is not disciplinary in nature, although at times there is a parallel discipline process that occurs simultaneously based on each unique situation.**

VTRA is considered a supportive process where teams engage in a detailed analysis of what is happening in a student's life in collaboration with families. Trained VTRA teams work from the perspective that serious violence is an evolutionary process. The role of the VTRA team is to determine why there was an increase or change in the baseline behaviour and whether the individual poses a risk to self or others. After the analysis is completed, the team identifies and develops strategies and interventions to reduce identified risk enhancers that exist and support families to implement a plan to improve trajectory.

This protocol is founded on the work of Kevin Cameron and the Center for Trauma-Informed Practice (CTIP) (formerly the North American Center for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response) and as such, reflects research and evidence-based practices from the fields of medical and mental health, law enforcement, threat management and more.

Traditional crisis response in schools, colleges, and universities is typically a short-term intervention immediately following the incident. The approaches to understanding and intervening from a multi-disciplinary systems perspective is one factor that makes the CTIP approach truly pioneering. It is the process of deliberately trying to “connect the dots” or data that paints the picture that someone is moving on a pathway toward serious violence before the violent act occurs.

The multi-disciplinary approach to VTRA has four basic steps:

1. Identify worrisome or threatening behaviour;
2. Use a multi-disciplinary team to conduct a violence threat risk assessment;
3. Determine if a threat-maker poses a risk and the potential level of risk; and
4. Intervene appropriately.

There are two VTRA stages:

Threat Assessment (Stage 1 VTRA): Is the process of determining if a threat-maker actually poses a risk to the target or targets they have threatened. Partners are engaged to





rapidly gather data about the situation and identify the level of risk around a specific incident. Intervention plan is typically focused on the interventions required in the immediate environment where the threats occurred.

Risk Assessment (Stage 2 VTRA): Is the process of determining if an individual may pose a further risk to a known or unknown target or targets in an unknown period of time. Partners are engaged to gather more specific information and data around the threat and develop a multi disciplinary plan to intervene and address risk enhancers present in the student's life.

Not all Stage 1 Threat Assessments result in a Stage 2: Several cases are resolved at Stage 1 when:

- the incident proves to either be a moment in time, bad judgment call by the threat maker that is low risk,
- information resulted in the activation of Stage 1 proves to be unsubstantiated, or
- as in most of our cases, adequate interventions are able to be put into place under the direction of a team that addresses the needs of the threat maker and target.

VTRA Conducted

So far in 2024-2025, there has been one (1) VTRA level 1 conducted. In 2023 - 2024, there were five (5) VTRA level 1 conducted. There have been no VTRA level 2 initiated by Sturgeon Public schools in the past two years.

Through partnerships with the RCMP and Child and Family Services, VTRA interventions have successfully de-escalated high-risk situations, fostering safer school environments. The integration of VTRA with TCIS and Behavior Plans ensures a cohesive approach to student support and risk management





TCIS, COMPLEX BEHAVIOURS AND IN SCHOOL INCIDENTS

Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools (TCIS) is a comprehensive system designed to equip school staff with the skills needed to manage emotional and behavioural challenges effectively, ensuring safe and supportive learning environments for all students. TCIS aligns with **Policy 900: Student Conduct and Discipline** and **AP 901: Student Conduct**, emphasizing proactive and restorative practices.

What is TCIS?

TCIS provides a framework for:

- Proactively preventing and de-escalating challenging situations.
- Creating environments where students and staff feel safe.
- Managing high-stress situations in a structured, planned way, including the use of physical intervention when absolutely necessary to reduce risks of harm.

Staff trained in TCIS are equipped to:

- Recognize behaviours as signals of underlying needs.
- Respond with strategies that support co-regulation and emotional growth.
- Build trusting relationships with students to foster resilience and self-regulation.

How Does TCIS Work?

TCIS operates through proactive and responsive interventions that focus on:

- **Managing the environment** to reduce triggers.
- Using strategies like prompting, redirection, and giving choices to guide behaviour.
- Implementing active listening and crisis co-regulation to support students during emotional dysregulation.
- Employing the **Life Space Interview (LSI)** to help students process events, clarify what occurred, and practice self-regulation skills.

Impact on Students and Classrooms

Following incidents where TCIS is applied, staff:

- Facilitate restorative conversations to repair relationships and reinforce shared responsibilities.
- Guide students back to their routines and classrooms with strategies for sustained success.
- Collaborate with parents to ensure a cohesive approach to supporting the student.





Alignment with Division Practices

While TCIS is focused on growth and co-regulation, consequences for behaviour may still be applied when necessary, in accordance with the School Code of Conduct and the division's discipline policies. These measures are separate from the TCIS framework but are implemented transparently with input from students and families.

Behaviour and Safety Plans in Schools

Behaviour Plans and Safety Plans are integral components of Sturgeon Public Schools' commitment to creating safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments, in alignment with **Policy 110: Welcoming Inclusive, Safe, and Healthy Environments** and **Policy 900: Student Conduct and Discipline**.

Behaviour Plans

Behaviour is a form of communication, signalling that a student has unmet needs. Behaviour Plans are designed to address these needs through:

- Proactive Strategies: Identifying triggers and reducing environmental stressors.
- Skill Development: Teaching lagging skills to help students navigate challenges.
- Positive Connections: Building trusting relationships to foster emotional growth and engagement.

These plans emphasize meeting students at their developmental level and ensuring they feel safe and connected, as the brain prioritizes safety before learning can occur. Predictability, consistency, and calm responses from adults are crucial for the effectiveness of a Behaviour Plan.

Safety Plans

When a student is at risk of harming themselves or others, a Safety Plan is implemented to prioritize the physical safety of all individuals involved. Safety Plans work in conjunction with Behaviour Plans, focusing on:

- Proactively addressing potential risks.
- Responding to situations with calm, clear protocols.
- Ensuring the safety of students, classmates, and staff while maintaining the dignity of the student.

Purpose and Impact

Both plans aim to create environments where students can thrive by addressing their individual needs and challenges. They reflect the division's emphasis on restorative practices, trauma-informed approaches, and collaborative problem-solving. Staff work

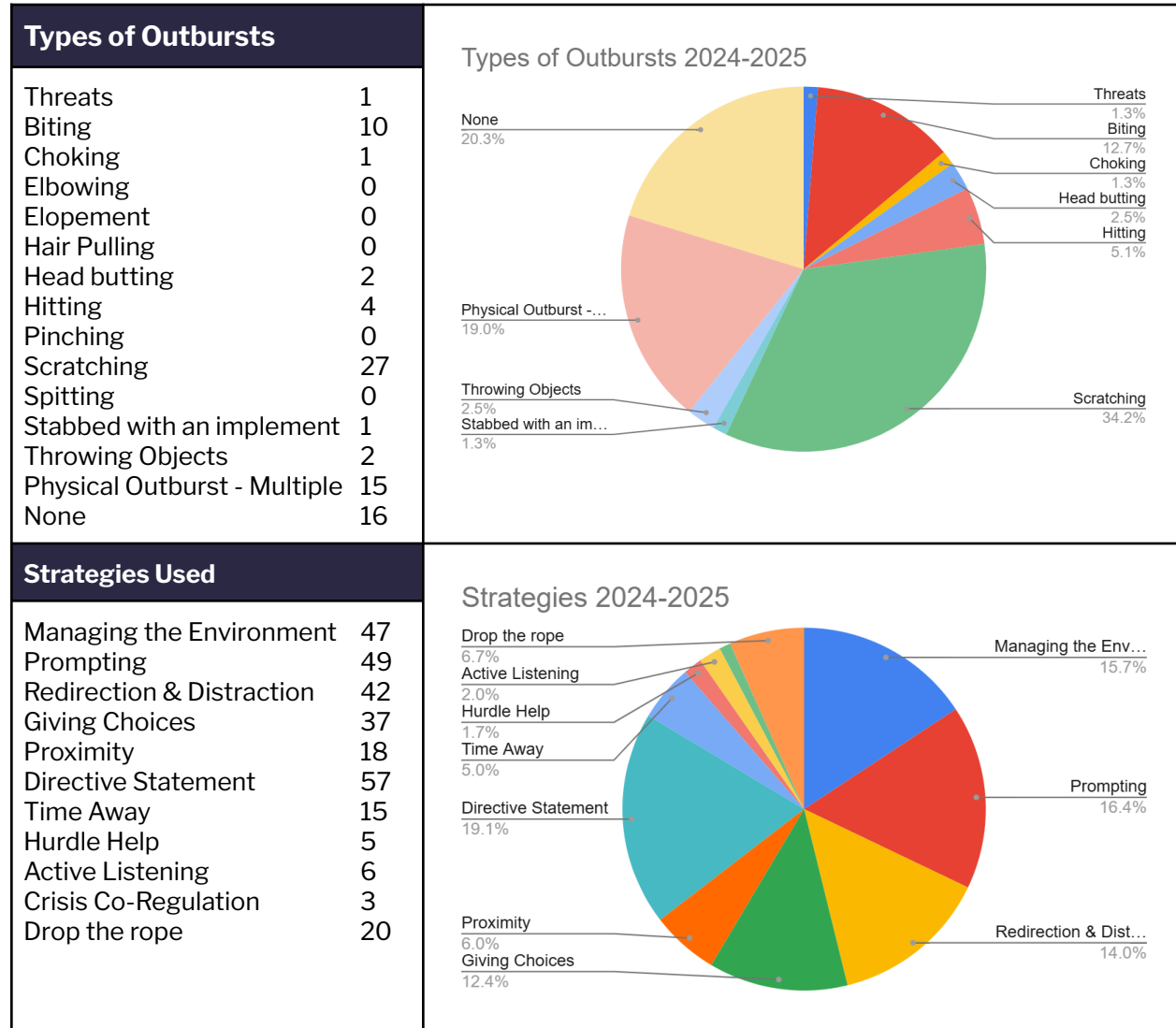




closely with students and families to develop and review these plans, ensuring consistency and shared understanding.

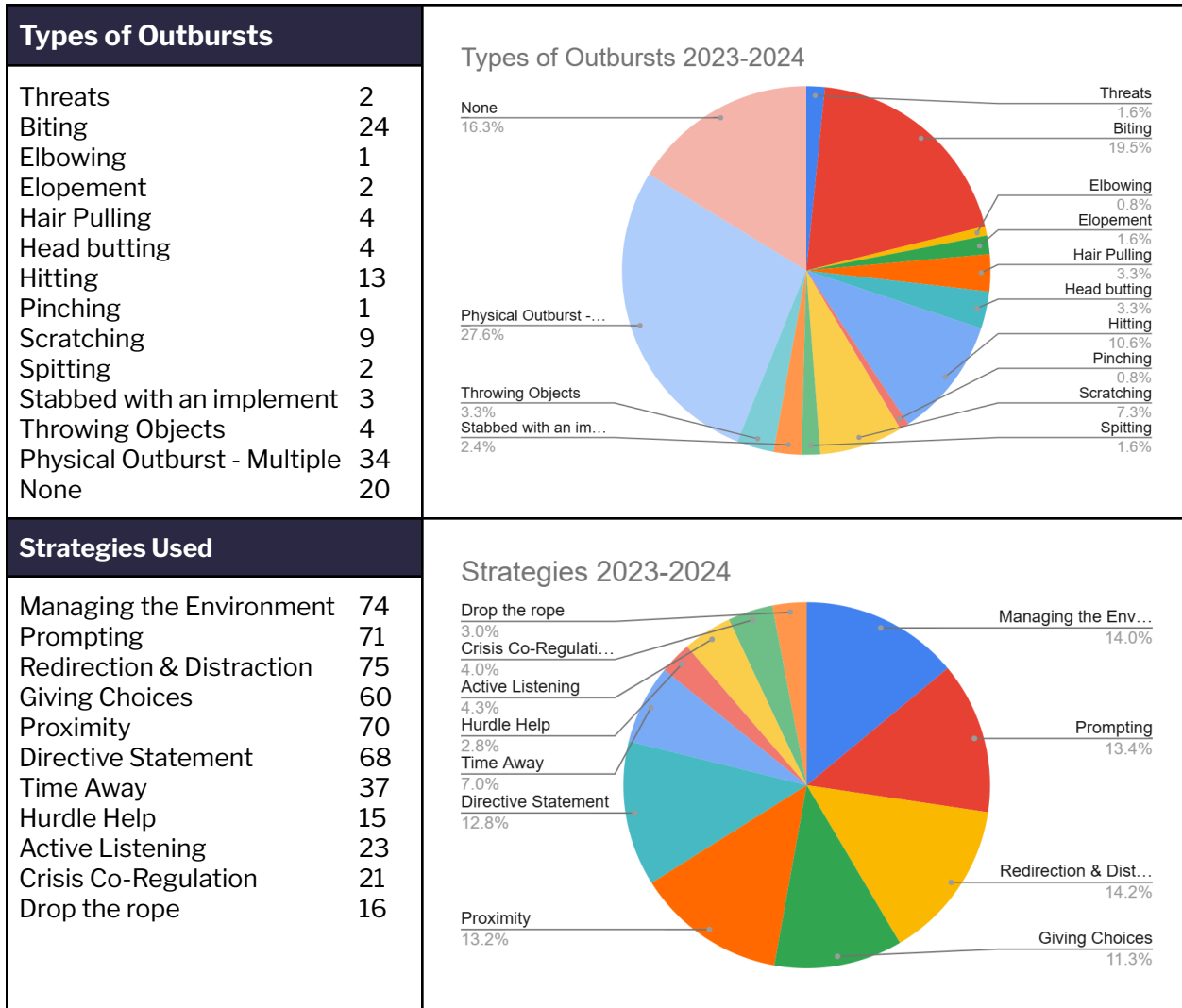
Behaviour Incidents in School, Outbursts and Strategies Data

2024 - 2025





2023 - 2024



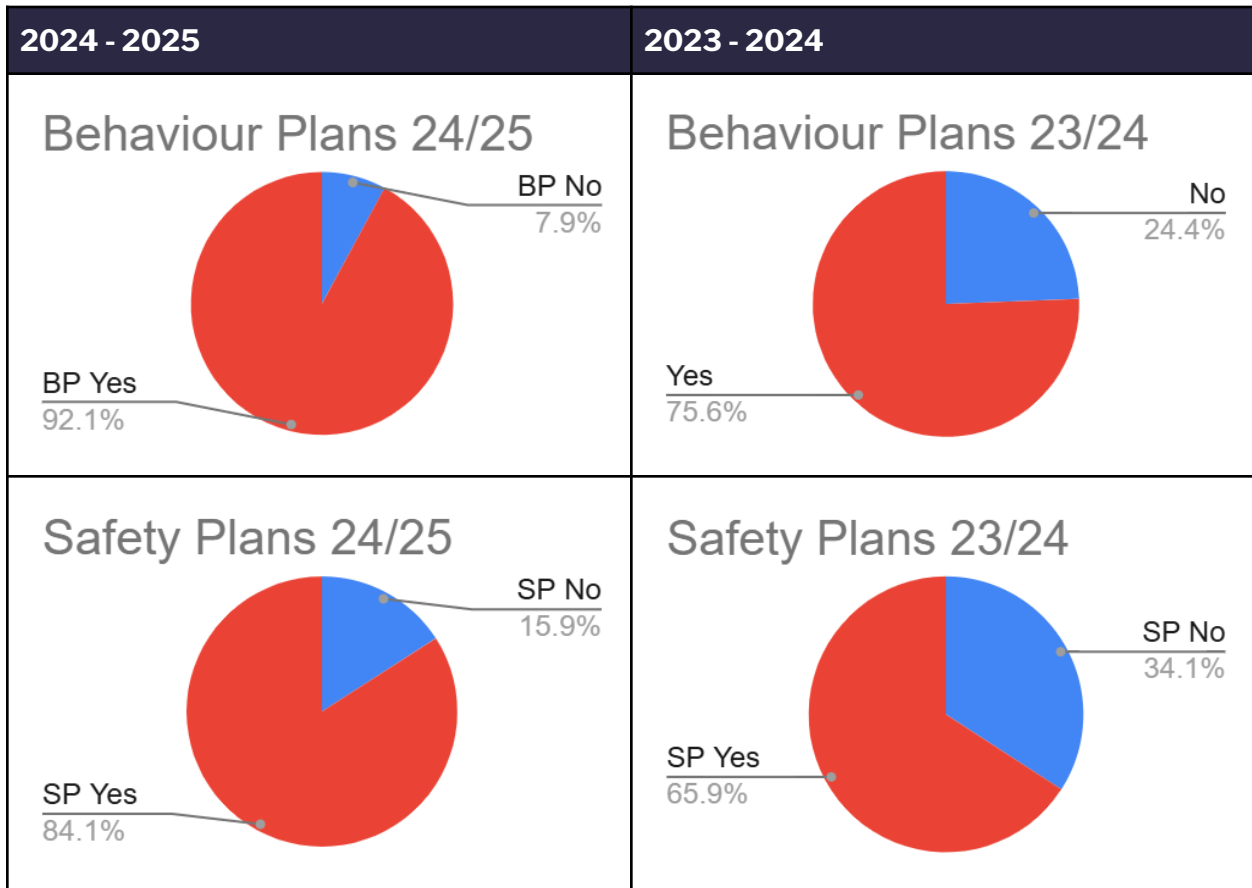
The frequent use of 'Managing the Environment' and 'Prompting,' as shown in the strategy data, highlights the alignment of TCIS principles with everyday practices. The increased use of proactive strategies like 'Redirection and Distraction' correlates with a decrease in physical outbursts, as shown in year-over-year comparisons. To date, over 181 staff members have been trained in TCIS, ensuring consistent application of its principles across schools.





Outbursts with Behaviour or Safety Plans Data

The following data illustrates how Behaviour and Safety Plans are applied in response to specific types of incidents. A Safety Plan implemented for a student exhibiting aggressive behaviour resulted in a significant reduction in outbursts, demonstrating the effectiveness of proactive strategies.



CONCLUSION

Sturgeon Public Schools remains committed to fostering environments where all students can thrive. The Division continually reviews and adapts its practices in line with evolving challenges and legislative requirements.





REFERENCES

- Policy 110: Welcoming Inclusive, Safe, and Healthy Environments
- Policy 900: Student Conduct and Discipline
- AP 901: Student Conduct
- Education Act: Sections 31-37

