

Saskatchewan Municipal Best Practice

Anti-Bullying Bylaw

CONTACT

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THE PRACTICE

In light of local and high-profile national cases of bullying, the Town of Eston wanted to help provide a safe, healthy community for residents. They crafted a bylaw defining what constitutes bullying and outlines enforcement and fines for those who bully. The fines are on an increasing scale by incident. It also offers a step for the RCMP to take with local offenders before going to court.

By giving a clear-cut definition and creating the bylaw, the town, the school, and the RCMP have another tool in the fight against bullying. It has allowed people to talk and not keep their emotions bottled up. Even if it turns out not to be bullying or it is handled in a different manner, it has been an avenue to get people talking, especially the ones that are being bullied. It is a tool that helps with both education and deterrence.

THE PROCESS

Town staff worked with local RCMP and the school to research and draft the bylaw. The Town of Eston Anti-Bullying Bylaw No. 2-2013 was adopted on January 23, 2014, and there was a launch on April 10, 2013 (International Day of Pink) with a community Pink Day Walk up Main Street.

THE RESULTS

The Anti-Bullying Bylaw is a way to deal with those who bully others in the community. It provides an additional step for RCMP officers to deal with offenders rather than going to court. The bylaw allows the Town of Eston to fine offenders, essentially giving the town, school, and law enforcement another tool to use to combat bullying. RCMP Constable Dean Kletzel has found the bylaw to be a useful tool in handling offenders.

The Pink Day Walk helped bring the community together in support of a common goal. The entire process of developing the bylaw helped to educate youth on appropriate behavior, and helped to empower youth and community members to speak out against bullying as they were part of the bylaw's development.

It also rooted leadership qualities in youth by showing that it is okay to set healthy boundaries and to speak out against bullying.

Requests for the bylaw have come in from Montreal, Saskatchewan communities, and others in Nova Scotia.

LESSONS LEARNED

Before there was a definition of what bullying was there were a lot of things that may have started out as something small and insignificant but because they were not dealt with right away, it did turn into what could be considered bullying. Now with the definition it is easier to educate either way. There have also been comments from the people who have felt they are being bullied, that they now feel like they have a voice and that there will be some form of consequence.