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## Outlook anti-bullying bylaw finally 'something with teeth'

**Derek Ruttle | The Outlook**

A presentation by two of Outlook's RCMP force has cast a spotlight on what is now the Town of Outlook's newly-minted anti-bullying bylaw.

Constables Jesse Kimball and Fraser Cameron were on hand at Outlook High School on Thursday, May 19 to speak to teachers, parents and citizens about the bylaw, highlighting the fact that while children can typically be the main focus in bullying scenarios, this bylaw includes helping every person of every age. But discussions such as this are seen as the starting point to begin educating kids on bullying and harassment.

"It's critical to educate the leaders of the community on this in order to take it back to the kids," said Jesse.

Its official title may be a little wordy, 'Bylaw No. 02(2022) - A Bylaw of the Town of Outlook to Control Harassment and Bullying of Persons in the Town of Outlook, Known as the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Bylaw', but the goal with such a document is to cover all the bases as much as possible and give people such as the police some strength in being able to respond to such complaints. The creation of the bylaw comes from the reality that there have been incidents in Outlook that didn't necessarily fit the criteria for police investigations, so following the steps to establish such a bylaw was about finding a solution that fit that criteria to ensure that victims are and most

importantly feel protected and more at ease.

"Unfortunately, while we all feel we're going to grow out of it, that sometimes doesn't happen," said Cameron, touching on the fact that bullying happens in older and adult age groups

encouraging bullying, including \$100 for the first offence and \$250 and/or 25 hours of community service for the second. The bylaw states that the Town, upon the receipt of payments of fines, will dedicate the payment or a portion thereof received by

Kimball, referring to the listed penalties. "If issues get resolved and we're building relationships, then it's a win for everybody."

Constable Kimball as well as Outlook mayor Maureen Weiterman, who was in attendance, said that it was important to

Presentations by both officers have been made in recent weeks to students in grades 6-12, and they're looking at possible ways to address the younger demographic in the community.

One question arose over whether the penalties would bring statistics down, and Kimball noted that the police know that throwing money at the problem by way of fines doesn't make the problem fully go away at times. Bystanders were also brought up, as they can be seen as enablers and it was said that there also needs to be accountability on their end.

To that point, OHS teacher Keith Theoret shared that when he was going to school, bystanders were equally punished for not breaking up fights or stepping in when necessary.

The officers noted that in their anti-bullying discussions with kids, a lot of them are understanding that their actions can have serious consequences and the hard dose of reality that comes with treating others harshly is hitting home with many of them.

The feeling among many in the room was that while the problem of bullying is still very real and very present, sometimes dangerously so, initiatives such as a community bylaw aimed at protecting everyone are a significant step in the right direction.

Copies of the bylaw are available at the Town of Outlook office and it was also scheduled to be posted on the Town's official website.



as well as between kids' age groups.

Enforcement of the bylaw can make for some steep penalties, including a first offence fine of \$250 and/or 25 hours of community service, and a second offence fine of \$1000 and/or 50 hours of community service. As well, there are fines and penalties to address the issue of

the Town to a local charitable organization that works to help victims of harassment or similar actions.

Of course, the true intent behind all of this is to curb bullying and stamp it out before it reaches the point where heavy fines need to be doled out.

"We're here to resolve situations outside of this," said

work together on something that had proverbial teeth so that it gave police something tangible in order to move forward on complaints that were received by the RCMP. Before this bylaw was created, police felt like their hands were tied at times because many complaints that came in didn't fit the necessary guidelines for them to act on it.



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