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# Bullying Prevention and Intervention

## Policy Directive

(effective February 2010)

(reference: PPM 144)

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Date Approved: 01/10

Projected Review Date: 02/11

### **Schools will incorporate the following procedures/guidelines into their School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Strategies**

#### **1.0 RATIONALE**

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The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board believes that every student has the right to be treated with dignity and respect and to feel safe within the school environment. The research concerning the safe and orderly correlate of effective schools currently being implemented by Hamilton-Wentworth schools supports this belief. Students who are free from bullying are able to give their education the full attention and effort needed for success.

Bullying behaviour negatively impacts not only the learning environment of a school but can lead to more serious violence, as well as long-term social and emotional problems not only for those powerless individuals who are the victims of repeated aggression, but for those who perpetrate it and also for those who see it happening.

Bullying will not be tolerated on Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board property, at school related activities, on school buses, or in any other circumstances where engaging in bullying behaviour will have a negative impact on healthy relationships and the school climate.

At the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board we believe that it is everyone's responsibility to stop bullying behaviour within the school community.

#### **2.0 DEFINITION OF BULLYING**

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**Bullying is typically a form of repeated, persistent, and aggressive behaviour directed at an individual or individuals that is intended to cause (or should be known to cause) fear and distress and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, or reputation. Bullying occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance.**

- Students who bully are learning to use power and aggression to control and distress others
- Students who are victimized become increasingly powerless and find themselves trapped in relationships in which they are being abused
- Students use power in many ways:
  - Size, strength, intelligence, age
  - Social status
  - Economic status
  - Knowledge of another person's vulnerability
  - Membership in a dominant group

### 3.0 TYPES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOURS ---

- 3.1 **Physical:** Repeated hitting, kicking, shoving, beating up, stealing, or damaging another person's property
- 3.2 **Verbal:** Repeated name-calling, mocking, humiliating, teasing, threatening, racist comments, sexual harassment
- 3.3 **Social:** Repeated rolling of the eyes, excluding others from the group, gossiping, spreading rumours, making another person or persons look foolish, and damaging another person's friendships.
- 3.4 **Electronic/Cyber:** The repeated use of email, cell phones, text, internet and web sites to threaten, harass, embarrass, socially exclude or damage reputations or friendships.
- 3.5 **Racial:** Repeated aggression, or repeatedly saying negative things, or repeated name calling directed to a person or persons because of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religious beliefs or background.
- 3.6 **Sexual/ Sexual Orientation:** Repeatedly leaving a person or persons out or treating them badly because of their gender or sexual orientation; repeatedly making crude comments about a person or persons' sexual behaviour; repeatedly making sexist comments or jokes, touching, or grabbing someone in a sexual way; repeatedly spreading sexual rumours about a person or persons; repeatedly calling a person or persons gay, fag, lesbian, or other inappropriate names.
- 3.7 **Disability:** Repeatedly excluding a person or persons or treating them badly because of a disability or need for special education; repeatedly making comments or jokes to hurt a person or persons with a disability.

### 4.0 STAFF, STUDENT, PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES ---

All members of the school community have responsibility for bullying prevention and for addressing bullying when it occurs. Although this responsibility rests with all members of the school community, some members have responsibility to provide leadership in specific areas/ situations.

#### 4.1 STAFF

**All staff members within the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will:**

- model caring, respectful interactions;
- raise awareness of bullying behaviour and its long-term effect on all students;
- recognize that creating a positive environment is key in the prevention of bullying behaviours in schools;
- develop and share a clear and developmentally appropriate definition of bullying behaviour, based on the definition in this policy directive;
- include bullying prevention as a regular item on staff meeting agendas;
- provide support to new students to ensure that they understand expectations and routines;
- provide opportunities for positive student leadership for all students;
- encourage students to report bullying behaviours. Teach students the difference between **tattling/rattling** (getting someone into trouble) and **telling** (helping someone who is in trouble);
- develop a safe and anonymous way for students to report bullying (drop box, phone line, and website);
- take every report of bullying seriously;
- respond to all incidents of bullying, if it is safe to do so in their opinion, by labeling and intervening quickly to any bullying behaviour of which they are aware;

- engage bystanders – teach skills needed to deal with bullying situations positively and safely;
- work with students and parents to resolve bullying issues in a timely and developmentally appropriate manner;
- teach students pro-social behaviours and prompt and reinforce them throughout the school day;
- provide intervention and support to assist students who engage in bullying behaviours to change their behaviours;
- communicate to students and parents that a student who is engaged in bullying conduct will be subject to a range of interventions, including suspension;
- develop a safe intervention plan for students who are victims of bullying;
- report incidents of bullying to the Principal if the bullying may lead to suspension or expulsion.

#### 4.2 STUDENTS

**All students within the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will:**

- treat everyone with dignity and respect;
- raise their awareness and understanding of bullying behaviour and its long-term effects;
- realize that bullying behaviour is never acceptable;
- report incidents of bullying behaviour whenever they see it;
- engage in positive leadership opportunities;
- provide support to new students or students who are alone/friendless;
- endeavour to disengage from being a bystander to bullying behaviours;
- actively support their school's bullying prevention and intervention programs;
- support a positive school climate.

#### 4.3 PARENTS

**All parents of students within the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will:**

- treat everyone with dignity and respect;
- report incidents of bullying behaviour whenever they see it;
- raise their awareness and understanding of bullying behaviour and its long-term effects;
- in partnership with the school staff, work to address and rectify incidents of bullying behaviour (whether the parent of the student who is victimized, engaging in bullying behaviour, or bystander to bullying incidents);
- create awareness among their children/youth that bullying is never acceptable;
- endeavour to get appropriate social/emotional help for their child if necessary;
- support their school's anti bullying initiatives;
- encourage their children/youth to report incidents of bullying behaviour;
- model caring and respectful interactions;
- teach their children/youth to be respectful and caring individual.

## 5.0 RESPONDING BY BOARD EMPLOYEES TO INCIDENTS THAT MAY LEAD TO BULLYING

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All Board employees who work directly with students must respond to all student behaviours that may lead to bullying.

Board employees who work directly with students include administrators, teachers, and non-teaching staff (including staff in social work, child and youth, psychology, and related areas, educational assistants, etc).

Responding may include: asking a student to stop the behaviour, naming the behaviour and explaining why it is inappropriate and /or disrespectful, and asking the student to correct the behaviour eg. apologize for a hurtful comment and/or to rephrase a comment).

**\*Note:** Board employees are not required to respond to incidents when, in their opinion, responding would cause immediate physical harm to themselves, a student, or to another person.

## 6.0 REPORTING BY BOARD EMPLOYEES TO BULLYING INCIDENTS ---

All Board employees who work directly with students must report all incidents of bullying to the Principal.

Board employees who work directly with student include administrators, teachers, and non-teaching staff (including staff in social work, child and youth, psychology, and related areas, educational assistants, etc). Bus drivers must also report incidents of bullying.

**Verbal Reports:** A verbal report must be made to the Principal for incidents for which suspension or expulsion would not be considered. The verbal report is to be made as soon as possible following the incident.

**Written Reports:** For incidents of bullying for which suspension or expulsion must be considered, Board employees must report to the principal no later than the end of the school day and confirm their report in writing using the Ministry Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form Part 1. The written report is to be submitted within 24 hours of the incident.

## 7.0 PRINCIPAL RESPONSE TO REPORTS ---

### 7.1 After a report is submitted, the Principal must:

- provide a written acknowledgement of the receipt of the report using the Ministry Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form-Part II to the employee who reported. Information that could identify the student(s) involved must not be part of the acknowledgement;
- identify if action\* has been taken or no action is required.

\*Possible actions taken can include anything on the progressive discipline continuum eg. warning, contacting parent, removal of privileges, suspension.

7.2 **If no further action** is taken by the Principal, there is no requirement to retain the report and it should be destroyed. The report is not to go in the Ontario School Record (OSR).

7.3 **If action is taken**, the form and documentation must be kept in the students Ontario School Record (OSR) for a minimum of one year, and,

- The names of all the other students appearing on the form (aggressors and victims) must be removed except the name of the student in whose OSR the form is going;
- Nothing about the incident is to go into the victim's OSR unless the victim/parent of the victim specifically request that this is done.

***Note: This formal report does not replace conversations between the employee and the Principal. The Principal and the employee are encouraged to talk about the incident regardless of action taken.***

## 8.0 NOTICE TO PARENT/GUARDIAN OF VICTIMS (Section 300.3(3) Ed. Act) ---

8.1 Principals are required to inform parents/guardian of students who have been harmed as a result of any incident for which suspension/expulsion must be considered.

8.2 Principals are not permitted to inform the parents of a victim when, in the Principal's opinion, doing so would put the victim at risk of harm from the parent. If the Principal decides not to notify the parent, the Principal must:

- consult with the manager of student services for further advice;
- document the rationale for the decision not to notify the parent or guardian of the pupil;
- inform the school Supervisory Officer of this decision;
- if a teacher reported the harm to the principal, inform the teacher of the decision;
- if it is determined it is appropriate to do so, inform other Board employees of the decision not to notify a parent or guardian of the pupil;

- 8.3** If a staff person has any reasonable grounds to suspect that a student, who is under the age of 16, is or may be in need of protection from the person having charge of him or her, the staff person must report this directly to the CAS, and not rely on any other person to report on his or her behalf.

## **9.0 DISCLOSURE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF VICTIMS** \_\_\_\_\_

- 9.1** When notifying the parent/guardians of a victim, Principals must disclose the following:
- the nature of the incident that resulted in harm to the student;
  - the nature of the harm to the student;
  - the steps taken to protect the student's safety, including the nature of any discipline in response to the incident (eg. suspension given, parent's called).
- 9.2** Principals must not share the name of the aggressor or any other identifying or personal information with the parents of the victim beyond what is listed above (eg. referral to counselling or any other personal information).

## **10.0 SUPPORTS FOR VICTIMS OF SERIOUS STUDENT INCIDENTS** \_\_\_\_\_

(incidents leading to suspension or expulsion)

- 10.1** All Board employees must take allegations of gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment, and inappropriate sexual behaviour (PPM145) and bullying (PPM144) seriously and act in a timely, sensitive, and supportive manner.
- 10.2** Board employees working directly with students must support all students, including those who disclose/report such incidents by:
- providing contact information about professional supports (eg. community agency)
  - developing specific student plans to protect the student (eg. safe intervention plans);
  - making this information readily available to students who may wish to discuss issues of healthy relationships, gender identity, and sexuality (eg. public health)
  - provide parents with student services pamphlet if they are not satisfied with the supports their child receives;
  - contact the manager of student services for assistance in referring students to a community agency for confidential support when his/her parents are not notified (eg. Sexual Assault Centre, Kids Help Phone, LGBT Youth Line).
- 10.3** When the Board (in consultation with the Principal) determines that it is necessary to separate students to preserve school safety or to protect a student, it is preferable that the victim not be moved, unless the victim/parent/guardian makes a specific request to do so.

## **11.0 PREVENTION STRATEGIES** \_\_\_\_\_

### **11.1 Positive School Climate:**

A positive school climate is defined by the Ministry of Education as “the sum total of all the personal relationships within a school.” When these relationships are founded in mutual acceptance and inclusion, and modeled by all, a culture of respect becomes the norm. A positive school climate exists when all members of a school community feel safe, comfortable, and accepted.

All schools will develop programs that actively promote and support positive behaviours and reflect the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's Character Education development initiatives.

### **11.2 Teaching Strategies:**

Teaching strategies will be used that focus on developing healthy relationships including bullying prevention in daily classroom teaching.

### **11.3 Code of Conduct:**

All members of the school will become familiar with and demonstrate understanding of the Board's and School's Code of Conduct which sets out expected standards for behaviour.

### **11.4 Safe School Committee** (an existing school committee can assume this role):

Each school shall have a Safe Schools Team. The school's Safe Schools Committee shall be composed of at least one student where appropriate, parent, teacher, support staff, community partner, and administrator. The Safe Schools Committee monitors and reviews the school climate, including data from the mandatory safe schools survey administered every two years, and recommends appropriate interventions/preventions as needed. The Chair of the committee must be a staff member.

The Safe School Committee should use data related to bullying behaviours to monitor and review the effect of school bullying prevention programs. Data may include safe school survey information, suspension and expulsion data, student comments, parental input, etc.

### **11.5 Training:**

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will continue to provide bullying prevention and intervention training to staff and students. Locally, schools are encouraged to provide programs for parents on bullying prevention and intervention.

Students will also be provided with training on bullying prevention and on leadership initiatives within their own schools.

Training will include a focus on cultural sensitivity, respect for diversity and special needs.

### **11.6 Partnerships with Community Agencies and Businesses:**

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board actively pursues community partnerships that will assist schools and communities to work toward eliminating bullying in all of our environments.

## **12.0 MONITOR AND REVIEW** \_\_\_\_\_

The Board will establish a monitoring and review process to determine the effectiveness of this Policy. The Safe Schools survey is to be completed by each school every other year.

## **13.0 SCHOOL PLANS** \_\_\_\_\_

Each school shall develop and implement school-wide bullying prevention and intervention plans as part of the school improvement planning.

These plans must include:

- the definition of bullying
- prevention strategies
- intervention strategies
- communication strategies
- monitoring and review process, including data from the school climate surveys to be completed every two years.

#### **14.0 ALIGNMENT TO OTHER BOARD POLICIES AND PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION INCLUDES BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO:**

Part XIII of the Education Act  
An Act to Amend the Education Act (Progressive Discipline and School Safety), 2007  
Ontario Regulation 472/07  
Access to School Premises – Ontario Regulation 474/00  
Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour Policy  
Code of Conduct Policy  
Suspension of Pupils Policy  
Expulsion of Students Policy  
Information Technology Policy  
Personal Electronic Devices Policy  
Trespass Act  
OCT Standards of Teaching Practice  
Equity Policy (PPM 119)  
Respectful Working Environments Policy  
Harassment Policy  
Progressive Discipline Procedures (employees)  
Collective Agreements for all employee groups  
Purchasing/Procurement Policies  
Ontario Human Rights Code  
Ontario Criminal Code  
Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act  
Safe Schools Pillar Policy  
Partnership Policy  
Volunteer Policy

# SUGGESTED RESOURCES FOR SCHOOL USE

## Intervention Strategies

### Aggressive Incident \_\_\_\_\_ Bullying

Usual  
disciplinary  
process

#### **Perpetrators confirmed:**

- Protection of victimized student is first priority
- Victimized student and/or parents should be part of the problem-solving re safety
- Ask student if this is first time/how long has been going on
- Inform parents of both/all students involved
- Serious talk with student(s) who is engaging in bullying behaviour
- Developmentally appropriate consequence for student engaged in bullying behaviour
- Create a contract with student(s) engaging in bullying behaviour. List specific things they are going to do to change behaviour
- Review this at suitable interval
- Share this with the paren(s) of this student
- Share with the target student and their parents
- Serious talk and problem-solving with bystanders re what they can do to support student who is being targeted.
- Let bystanders know that they will also be held accountable if bullying behaviour is repeated

#### **Perpetrators unconfirmed:**

- Take every report seriously
- Protection of the student reporting that they have been bullied is the first priority
- Ask student 'Has this happened before and how often?'
- Student who has reported the incident/s should be part of the problem-solving re safety.
- Parents of this student should be informed of incident(s) and should also be involved in problem solving re safety
- Are there other students who may be able to help keep this student safe? (i.e. sit with in cafeteria, play with at recess, walk home with, sit on bus with)
- Inform teachers on playground duty to watch out for this student
- Inform peer mediators to watch out for this student and approach to assist or report to teacher on duty if they see aggression directed at this student.
- Encourage student to develop friendships
- Provide a teacher/peer mentor
- Check in with student and parents on a regular basis

# **Bullying Prevention Strategies and Interventions**

## **Elementary Bullying Intervention Benchmark Check List**

This checklist has been developed from the research literature on bullying prevention and intervention. It highlights the most important elements of a school anti-bullying program.

### **Interventions at the School Level**

- Questionnaire/Survey
- Staff in-service (include all staff in the building)
- Formation of a coordinating committee which must include at least one teacher, parent, student (where appropriate), support staff, community partner
- Develop clear and developmentally appropriate definition of bullying behaviour
- Take every incident seriously
- Develop clear rules and post (should be developed with the participation of all stakeholder groups and stated positively)
- Develop clear and consistent consequences
- School Assembly to introduce topic (may use play or inspirational speaker)
- Increased adult presence at high risk times/places
- Develop a way for students to report bullying anonymously (drop box which is checked daily)
- Provide a safe place/person for students to go if being bullied or harassed
- In-service for parents to raise awareness and facilitate discussion
- Regular agenda item at Staff, Divisional or Department Meetings
- Parent Support Groups for parents of students who are victims and/or parents of students who engage in bullying behaviour
- Whole School Social Skills Programs
- Peer Mentoring and Peer Mediation programs to prevent repeated aggression

### **Interventions at the Classroom Level**

- Class rules developed by students and teacher (should follow clearly from school-wide rules)
- Class develops levels of non-punitive consequences for bullying behaviour
- Regular class discussion of bullying issues
- Role playing/Practice of appropriate interactions (social skills program)
- Cooperative Learning
- Common Positive/Fun Activities (to build classroom/team cohesion)
- Parent/Teacher/Student meetings when necessary

### **Interventions at the Individual Student Level**

- Serious talks with bullies/victims
- Take every report seriously
- Serious talks with parents of both victims and students engaging in bullying
- Non-punitive, developmentally appropriate, consequences for engaging in bullying behaviour
- Help from 'neutral' students (pairing isolated students with more popular peers to carry out tasks in the classroom or school)
- Groups for students who are isolated/anxious/withdrawn
- Discussion groups for parents of victims

## **Secondary Bullying Intervention Benchmark Check List**

This checklist has been developed from the research literature on bullying prevention and intervention. It highlights the most important elements of a school anti-bullying program.

### **Interventions at the school level**

- Build awareness and involvement of all staff and parents
- Survey school population
- Co-ordinating committee must include at least one teacher, parent, student, support staff, community partner and administration
- School conference day
- Develop and share a clear definition of bullying
- Develop clear and consistent consequences
- Effective adult presence during break times
- Provide anonymous reporting format (drop box or phone line) checked daily
- Provide a safe place for students to go if they are being bullied or harassed.
- Regular agenda item at staff meetings
- Regular agenda item at school council meetings
- Regular agenda item at student council meetings
- In-service for parents to raise awareness and facilitate discussion
- Social Skills/Substance Abuse programs
- Peer Mediation/Peer Mentoring programs to prevent repeated aggression

### **Interventions at the class level**

- Class rules against bullying developed by teachers and students
- Label bullying when you see it and make it clear that it is not acceptable behaviour
- Watch out for students who are alone, shy, anxious and try to pair with more outgoing students for projects etc.
- Encourage students to befriend (look out for) those who may be isolated
- Consequences for bullying behaviour developed by students and teachers
- Regular class discussions around bullying
- Meeting with parents of students who are being victimized or are engaging in bullying behaviour

### **Interventions at the individual student level**

- Serious talks with students who engage in bullying behaviour
- Serious talks with the parents of students who bully
- Consistent and appropriate consequences for bullying behaviour
- Provide place of safety for students who are being victimized
- Development of individual intervention plan