



HAMILTON-  
WENTWORTH  
DISTRICT  
SCHOOL  
BOARD

# Safe & Caring SCHOOLS



## BULLYING

### *Information for Parents and Students*

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to making each and every one of its schools a caring place that is safe for learning.



[www.hwdsb.on.ca/programs/safeschools](http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/programs/safeschools)

ALL STUDENTS ACHIEVING THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

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*Every student deserves to feel and be safe in a school, on the school grounds, on the school bus, and at school events and activities. At Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB), we know safety is essential to good learning. Students learn and teachers teach more successfully when schools are safe. If a student misbehaves, the Principal decides on what steps to take to help the student improve his or her behaviour.*

**Certain behaviours may mean a child is bullying.**



## What is Bullying?

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.

- ▶ Size, strength, intelligence, age
- ▶ Social status
- ▶ Economic status
- ▶ Knowledge of another person's vulnerability
- ▶ Membership in a dominant group

## Types of Bullying Behaviours

**Physical:** Repeated hitting, kicking, shoving, beating up, stealing, or damaging another person's property

**Verbal:** Repeated name-calling, mocking, humiliating, teasing, threatening, racist comments, and sexual harassment

**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

**Electronic/Cyber:** The repeated use of email, cell phones, text, internet and web sites to threaten, harass, embarrass, socially exclude, or damage reputations and friendships

### **Racial:**

- Repeated aggression, exclusion, or negative comments directed to a person or persons because of their racial or ethnic background or cultural practices;
- Repeated calling of names to a person or persons, or making fun of their racial or ethnic background or cultural practices.

### **Religious:**

- Repeated aggression, exclusion, or negative comments directed to a person or persons because of their religious beliefs, background, dress code, or observances;
- Repeatedly calling a person or persons names or making fun of their religious beliefs, background, dress code, or observances.

### **Sexual:**

- 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.

### **Disability:**

- Repeatedly excluding a person or persons, or treating them badly because of a disability, perceived disability, or need for special education;
- Repeatedly making comments or jokes to hurt a person or persons with a disability.

For more information about the HWDSB Bullying Policy and Policy Directive please visit our website at [www.hwdsb.on.ca/aboutus/policies](http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/aboutus/policies)

## What to do if your child is being bullied:

- Talk with your child to gain more information and insight into their lives;
- Listen to their description of their day, including going to and from school and any events happening at school;
- Speak to your child's teacher or principal if you think your child is being bullied;
- Encourage your child to tell a trusted adult at school who can help stop the bullying;

- Encourage your child to be independent, and try not to be overprotective;
- Teach your child how to make new friends, stay alert to their environment and to be assertive;
- Encourage spare time activities which boost self-confidence;
- Seek help if you are concerned about your child's mental health.

**Tips for Parents:** visit our website, [www.hwdsb.on.ca/programs/safeschools](http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/programs/safeschools) for more information.

## What to do if your child is bullying:

- Take the problem seriously;
- Talk to your child about the behaviour, keeping in mind that children who bully often place the blame on others;
- Tell your child that you will not accept this type of behaviour and arrange for non-violent consequences which fit the seriousness of what your child has done;
- Discuss the negative impact this behaviour has on others;
- Give praise, or show kindness to others to show that you value considerate behavior;
- Teach them ways to resolve conflict without violent words or actions;
- Do not let them witness violent behaviour between family members;
- Spend time with your child, especially doing activities and avoiding examples of violence or aggression in the media;
- Increase your supervision when your child is with friends and discourage friendships with aggressive peers;
- Speak to your child's teacher or principal if you think your child is having difficulty accepting responsibility for their behavior;
- Seek help if you are concerned about your child's mental health.

## What to do if your child is a bystander of bullying:

- Teach them to empathize with the victim (to understand the feelings the victim is having);
- Help them to understand that there is a difference between "tattling" and "reporting" behaviours;
- Go with them to see the teacher or principal to report what they have seen;
- Teach your child to join with others to protect the child who is being bullied;

- Explain the long term negative social effects that the bullied child will have if the bullying does not stop;
- Encourage your child to make friends with others who are respectful and kind and to end relationships with those who cause pain;
- Model kindness and courage.

## Additional Information

### Positive School Climate

A positive school climate exists when all members of a school community feel safe, comfortable, and accepted. All schools have programs that promote and support positive behaviours and reflect Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's Character Education development initiatives.

### Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct, which outlines expectations and responsibilities for staff, students, parents, and visitors, is available in each school. The Board Code of Conduct is available online at [www.hwdsb.on.ca/programs/safeschools](http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/programs/safeschools)

### Keeping Our Kids Safe At School (Bill 157)

Board employees who work directly with students are required to respond to incidents that may have a negative impact on school climate. All board employees are required to report to the principal if they become aware that a student may have engaged in an activity for which the student must be considered for suspension or expulsion. Bullying is one of the behaviours for which suspension may be considered. Principals are to contact the parents of victims of such incidences.

### Safe School Committee

Each school has a Safe School Committee. The Safe School Committee uses 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.

### Partnerships with Community Agencies

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.

## Additional Resources for Parents and Students

You can contact the Principal or Vice Principal at your child's school. You can phone your school's superintendent.

Further counselling information may be available through the following:

- Family Physician
- Contact Hamilton 905-570-8888 or [info@contacthamilton.ca](mailto:info@contacthamilton.ca)
- Consultation with the school social worker
- Consultation with a psycho-educational consultant
- Information may be available through settlement workers in schools, who can help to facilitate home-school communication in a culturally-sensitive manner, as well as assisting with referrals and access to community resources.

Further information on-line is available through:

- [www.bullyfreehamilton.ca](http://www.bullyfreehamilton.ca)
- [www.PrevNet.ca](http://www.PrevNet.ca)
- [www.maccura.ca](http://www.maccura.ca)
- Hamilton Public Library: [www.hpl.ca](http://www.hpl.ca)
- Canadian Safe Schools Network: [www.canadiansafeschools.com](http://www.canadiansafeschools.com)
- Ministry of Education: [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/publications.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/publications.html)

*Please note: This booklet is intended for information purposes.  
It is not suitable nor intended for legal advice.*



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## SAFE & CARING BOOKLET SERIES:

1. Code of Conduct
2. Progressive Discipline
3. Bullying
4. Suspension
5. Expulsion
6. Gateway
7. Appropriate Dress
8. Safe Arrival Check



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