

# HWDSB

Information sharing for  
*student safety and well-being*

Safe &  
Caring  
SCHOOLS

Safety and well-being are priorities at Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board. We work with community partners to ensure safe and caring schools. At times, we may need to share student information with or without consent.

**This may occur in three circumstances:**

- Risk of maltreatment by a caregiver
- Risk to self
- Risk to others

HWDSB limits the sharing of personal information without consent. It will only occur on a “need to know” basis to maintain health and safety. HWDSB will only share information necessary for agencies, including police, to respond.



**Sharing Information about...**

## Risk of Maltreatment by a Caregiver

We all have a responsibility to keep children and youth from harm – but people who work with children have an added responsibility. By law, people who work with children must report suspected child maltreatment. Our staff must report to the local children’s aid societies. Local children’s aid societies may ask us for information to help them investigate and protect children. We may share this information.

HWDSB has agreements with local children’s aid societies that outline our legal and ethical duties to keep students safe from maltreatment.



**Sharing Information about...**

## Risk of Self Harm

If there is a real risk that a student will harm themselves, we will share necessary information until appropriate care occurs. We may do this without a student’s consent.

Generally, we will inform parents/guardians about their student’s health and wellness. Working together, we will help parents/guardians understand who to contact and what details are useful to share to keep their children safe.

## Sharing Information about...

### Threats to Others

Schools must report certain criminal activities to police. At times, HWDSB staff learn of violent threats. These may be verbal, written, drawn, posted on the Internet or made by gesture. We must take these seriously, investigate and respond so that we can:

- Ensure the emotional and physical safety of students, staff and others
- Understand the context of the threat and any contributing factors

To support this work, HWDSB is a partner in the Violent Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) – Hamilton Community Protocol. Together, the partners manage violent threats and promote safety. This may involve the sharing of relevant information. (Partners include school boards, police, hospitals and agencies serving children and youth.)

If violence seems imminent, HWDSB can legally share private information. The Privacy Commissioner of Ontario has stated that “life trumps privacy.” School boards must ensure that they follow relevant legislation and obtain consent when required.

### For more information, please contact:

**David Hoy**, MSW, RSW  
Manager, Social Work Services  
Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board  
(905) 527-5092 Ext. 2448  
dhoy@hwdsb.on.ca

