



Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Date Approved: 2015

Projected Review Date: 2019

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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to reinforce that Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) recognizes the importance of healthy relationships and a positive school climate to create a safe, inclusive and caring environment. Bullying will not be accepted on school property, at school related activities, on school buses, or in any other circumstance (e.g. on-line), where engaging in bullying will have a negative impact on the school climate, or adversely affects a student's ability to learn.

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

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- 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.
- 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.

All staff within HWDSB have a responsibility to:

- Model caring, respectful interactions.
- Respond to incidents of bullying.
- Raise awareness of bullying behaviour and help to reduce its long-term effect on all students.
- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Raise their awareness and understanding of bullying behaviour and its long-term effects.
- Recognize that bullying behaviour is never acceptable.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board promotes a safe, caring and orderly environment through the shared understanding of the definition of bullying, communicated to all within the school environment. The Board recognizes that bullying adversely affects a student's ability to learn. Bullying also adversely affects the school climate, including healthy relationships.

The intended outcomes of this policy are to:

- foster a positive school experience for all students
- support a positive school climate
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- acknowledge that it is shared responsibility to stop bullying from happening within school communities
- set guidelines for prevention and intervention of bullying behaviour, and
- share a common understanding of the definition of bullying behaviour.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Director of Education
Members of Executive Council

TERMINOLOGY:

Bullying is defined as aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a student where:

- a) the behaviour is intended, by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behaviour would be likely to have the effect of,
 - a. causing harm, fear or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social or academic harm, harm to the individual's reputation, harm to the individual's property, or
 - b. creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, and
- b) the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the pupil and the individual based on factors such as sex, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, disability, or the receipt of special education,

For the purposes of the definition, "bullying" behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

Students who bully are learning to use power and aggression to control and distress others. 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

Students who are victimized become increasingly powerless and find themselves trapped in relationships in which they are being abused.



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Types of Bullying:

Physical: may include hitting, pushing, slapping, tripping, kicking, shoving, beating up, stealing, or damaging another person's property

Verbal: may include name-calling, mocking, insults, threats, teasing, and sexist or racist comments

Social (or Relational): rolling of the eyes, excluding others from the group, gossiping, spreading rumours or images, humiliating others, making hurtful comments verbally or electronically, and damaging another person's friendships

Electronic/Cyber: including:

- a) creating a webpage or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person
- b) impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet
- c) communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals
- d) use of any social or electronic media such as email, cell phones, text, internet and web sites to threaten, harass, embarrass, socially exclude or damage reputations or friendships, or any other type of social bullying using electronic media

Racial: 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.

Religious: 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: leaving a person or persons out or treating them badly because of their gender, gender identity or gender expression; repeatedly making sexist or transphobic comments or jokes, touching or grabbing someone in a sexual way; repeatedly spreading sexual rumours about a person or persons

Sexual Orientation: leaving a person or persons out or treating them badly because of their sexual orientation; repeatedly making crude comments about a person or persons' sexual behaviour; repeatedly calling a person or persons derogatory or inappropriate names regarding their sexual orientation.

Disability: 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; mocking or teasing those who use assistive technology.



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ACTION REQUIRED:

School Climate Surveys (Safe, Equitable & Inclusive Schools surveys) shall be used to collect information from pupils, staff and parents/guardians of its pupils every two years.

Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week will begin on the third Sunday in November of each year.

A *multi-year plan* is to be developed to promote a positive school climate within Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board schools. The plan will be:

- congruent with the Provincial model of a bullying prevention and intervention,
- posted on the Board's and schools' websites;
- reviewed every two years

Inclusion in Code of Conduct

- Schools will incorporate into their Code of Conduct, the stipulations of this policy and associated procedures.
- Schools will incorporate into their Code of Conduct, the responsibilities for staff, students and parents/guardians as outlined in this policy.

Training

The Board shall establish and provide annual professional development programs to:

- educate teachers and other staff of the board about bullying prevention and strategies for promoting positive school climates, including responding to bullying
- provide curriculum-linked training strategies on bullying-prevention and intervention

Communication Strategies

The Board and/or schools will develop communication strategies that will:

- inform parents, students, and staff of the policy using the Board website, brochures, awareness campaigns, etc.
- promote partnerships and the development/update of protocols with community partners
- provide updates of Bullying Prevention and Intervention initiatives on an on-going basis through the Safe and Equitable Annual Workplan Report



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PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Intended Outcome	Assessment
Foster a positive school experience for all students.	School Climate Surveys indicate students and teachers have positive relationships.
Support a positive school climate.	School Climate Surveys indicate an increase in positive school climate.
Acknowledge that it is shared responsibility to stop bullying from happening within school communities.	A multi-year plan to promote a positive school climate will accompany the Safe and Equitable Schools Report to the Board of Trustees.
Set guidelines for prevention and intervention of bullying behaviour.	Recorded and monitored through data collection of safe schools surveys, suspensions and expulsions, and school data collection. Appropriate supports put into place as identified through data collection.

REFERENCES:

Government Documents

Part XIII of the Education Act
 Accepting Schools Act (Bill 13), 2012
 An Act to Amend the Education Act (Progressive Discipline and School Safety), 2007
 Policy/Program Memorandum 144 (Dec. 5, 2012)
 Safe Schools: Creating a Positive School Climate
 Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario: Supporting Students with Special Education Needs Through Progressive Discipline K-12
 Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009
 Ontario First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework, 2007
 English Language Learners: ESL and ELD Programs and Services, 2007
 Ontario Regulation 472/07
 Access to School Premises -Trespass Act
 OCT Standards of Teaching Practice
 Ontario Human Rights Code
 Ontario Criminal Code
 Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
 All applicable curriculum guidelines

HWDSB Policies

21st Century Learning and Technology



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Code of Conduct
Equity and Inclusive Education
Procurement
Staff Progressive Discipline
Student Behaviour and Discipline
Volunteer
Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention