



# BalACLAVA Elementary School

PROUD SCHOOL OF HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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March 29, 2018

Dear Families,

We understand the recent concerns about secure schools and wish to share some information. Please be assured that safety is our highest priority at HWDSB.

Whenever an incident occurs that may identify a student, privacy law requires that we maintain confidentiality. For this reason, I will focus on process and our general approach to secure schools.

When a safety concern or threat comes to our attention, we take it very seriously. A threat begins a process that involves consultation with our secure schools staff, namely our social work department, and an investigation by HWDSB senior staff.

If this HWDSB inquiry demands police time, Hamilton Police are quickly notified. Police make their own determination about the need for an investigation; HWDSB fully co-operates with any investigation and is guided by a Hamilton Police/School Board Protocol.

If consequences are required, we follow our [Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour Procedure](#).

We consider all mitigating circumstances and the seriousness of the behaviour when deciding on consequences for students. We work with parents to ensure that the student and parent understand the seriousness and possible consequences of their actions. We also involve community agencies as well as internal board resource and support staff, such as social workers or special education consultants as appropriate.

Our focus is to keep staff and students safe and, as educators, to help young people learn from mistakes. When a student returns to a school from a suspension or expulsion, we meet with them and their family to create a safety plan where necessary. Supports could be initiated by the parent/guardian, or in some cases may require school resources, such as the school administration or social worker to assist them.

In the most recent case at BalACLAVA, I can assure you that there was no safety issue at our school. If there had been, police would have advised us to activate our [Secure Schools Protocol](#).

Our students remained safe throughout the recent concern, yet we understand the heightened anxiety in our community. If your child would like to speak with someone, please contact us and we can provide supports.

If you would like to discuss this further, or have concerns, I would be happy to speak with you by phone or in person. The attached document may also help support discussions with your child.

Sincerely,

Meagan Wilson  
Principal