

Bullying Awareness and Prevention

School Council Module



curiosity

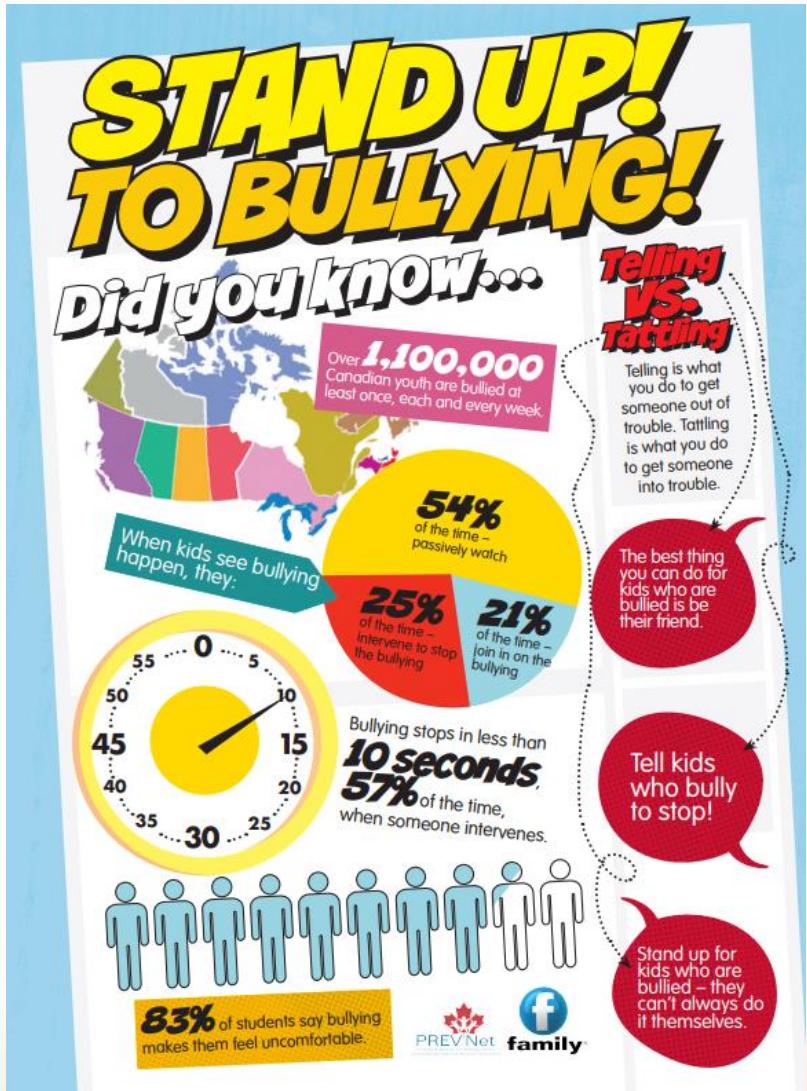
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Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to making all schools caring and safe places to learn.

Our first strategic priority, Positive Culture and Well-being, includes a focus on equity, inclusion, mental health and well-being.

Our focus is on supporting all students and staff to be safe, supported and accepted.



Bullying is a community issue that happens in places of athletics, social gatherings (e.g. malls) and sometimes in the home

Bullying is also a challenge in schools and workplaces

That doesn't mean it is okay

Your child's school is available to help

Aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a pupil 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,
 - i. 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
 - ii. creating a negative environment at a school for another individual
- 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.



Bullying usually includes key elements:

- Intent to harm
- Power imbalance
- Generally repeated

Even if behaviour doesn't include the key elements, report any harm to your child to your school. The school will investigate and follow up with the parent and child.



Bullying can take many forms. It can be:

- **Physical** (e.g., hitting, stealing or damaging property);
- **Verbal** (e.g., threats, or making sexist, racist or homophobic comments, name calling, negative comments about appearance, religion or disability);
- **Social** (e.g., excluding others, spreading gossip or rumours);
- **Electronic** (e.g., spreading rumours, images, or hurtful comments using technology).

If you experience bullying, know that:

- You are not alone
- It is not your fault and you do not deserve it
- Support is available. There are solutions to make it stop
- It takes courage to stand up for yourself and others
- All concerns will be taken seriously

Even if your child doesn't talk about it, you can watch for signs that your child is being bullied. Here are some signs to watch for:

- Not wanting to go to school; crying; or feeling sick more often, especially the night before or on school days.
- Not wanting to take part in activities or social events with other students.
- Acting differently than they normally do. Their behaviour may change, including being aggressive, frustrated, sad and having disrupted sleep patterns
- Suddenly losing money, personal items, or coming home with torn clothes or broken possessions, and offering explanations that don't make sense.
- Talking about dropping out of school and beginning to isolate themselves.

Source: *Bullying: We Can All Stop It, Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2013*

- Talk openly with your children
- Remind your child they have a right to be safe
- Be a partner with the school... be proactive
- Regularly talk with your child about their feelings
- Tell the school about changes in your child's behaviour
- Contact the school if bullying has occurred
- Contact police if there are safety concerns

By working with the school to help your child or teen handle the bullying problem, you are leading by example and giving a clear message that bullying is wrong.

Regardless of age, you can encourage your child to talk to you about bullying and give them advice:

- **Report** to the school right away
- Stay calm and **walk away** from the situation.
- **Tell an adult** whom you trust – a teacher, the principal, the school bus driver or the lunchroom supervisor – about what happened or report it anonymously.
- **Talk about it** with your brothers, sisters, or with friends, so that you don't feel you're alone.
- **Call Kids Help Phone** at 1-800-668-6868 or visit www.kidshelpphone.ca

Source: *Bullying: We Can All Stop It*, Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2013

- Value differences and treat ALL others with respect.
- Not become involved in bullying incidents or act like a bully.
- Tell an adult at school or home immediately about bullying. This is not “being a snitch” or “tattling” or “ratting” when someone is being hurt by a bully. Tattling or ratting is telling to get someone in trouble. Telling is getting yourself or someone help.
- Support other students who have been victims. Don’t be a bystander.
- Talk to a trusted adult including parents, teachers and principals about your questions and concerns.

- Work with other students and staff to help solve incidents of bullying
- Participate actively in all discussions about bullying and share ideas and solutions.
- Be a good role model for younger students and support them if bullying occurs.
- Remember, your role and responsibility is to work together in stopping bullying so that our schools will continue to be a positive place to learn and grow.

- Be a role model
- Behave with kindness, integrity and courage
- Help teach your child how to deal with conflict and how to respond appropriately
- Monitor social media regularly
- Seek help if you are concerned about your child's mental health
- Communicate about your child's relationships. Know their friends and who they spend time with
- Support school policies
- Seek support from the school when needed

How do I know that my child is bullying other kids?

- Coming home with items which do not belong to them
- Exhibiting aggressive and manipulative behavior with siblings
- Exhibiting aggressive and manipulative behavior with parents
- Putting others down in conversations
- Being unable to play co-operatively
- Being cruel to animals
- Exhibiting lack of empathy
- Befriending other aggressive children

What can I do if I suspect my child is bullying others?

- Contact your child's school
- Take the problem seriously
- Talk to your child about why this is happening
- Tell your child their behaviour is unacceptable and needs to stop
- Arrange for an effective, non-violent consequence
- Establish a few family rules and stick to them
- Spend some extra quality time with your child

What can I do if I suspect my child is bullying others?

- Increase your supervision of your child's activities.
- Seek help if you are concerned about your child's mental health.
- You may contact your school social worker through your school principal.

- When students feel safe, supported and accepted, the conditions are set for learning and achievement to flourish
- We all have a role to play in creating this environment.
- **Responding to and reporting** behaviour that negatively impacts school climate makes a difference (including bullying).
- Research shows 57% of all bullying stops if an adult intervenes within 10 seconds of the bullying interaction.



All Board employees who work directly with students must respond to all student behaviour that negatively impacts the school climate.

Responding may include:

- Asking a student to stop the inappropriate behaviour
- Naming the inappropriate behaviour and explaining why it is inappropriate and/or disrespectful
- Asking the student to correct the behaviour (e.g. apologizing for a hurtful comment and/or rephrasing a comment)



Reporting serious incidents, including bullying

All Board employees who work directly with students must verbally report all instances of behaviour which negatively impacts climate, including bullying.

The purpose of reporting is to:

- ensure the principal is aware of any activities taking place in the school for which a solution is required, suspension or expulsion must be considered and to offer support to all students involved
- help ensure a positive school climate



HWDSB uses a progressive discipline model when issuing consequences, which includes (but isn't limited to):

- Counselling
- Detentions
- Suspensions
- Expulsions
- Involvement of Police Liaison Officers

- Families will be involved throughout the process
- The model of discipline does not always progress step-by-step. One action may result in suspension or expulsion
- Schools will consider mitigating factors in determining consequences
- Outcomes are determined on a case-by-case basis

...my child was the victim?

- the nature of the activity that resulted in the 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 disciplinary measures taken in response to the activity
- the supports that will be provided for the student in response to the harm that resulted from the activity

Note: Parents will be included in discussions about supports for their child

...my child bullied another child?

- the nature of the activity that resulted in harm to the other student
- the nature of the harm to the other student
- the nature of any disciplinary measures taken in response to the activity
- the supports that will be provided for the student in response to his/her engagement in the activity (e.g. student services support, support for referral to community agency, etc.)

Note: Parents will be included in discussions about supports for their child

- Bystanders are the third group of players who witness acts of bullying
- Doing nothing has its own cost. It harms bystanders by leading to fear about getting involved

Some examples are:

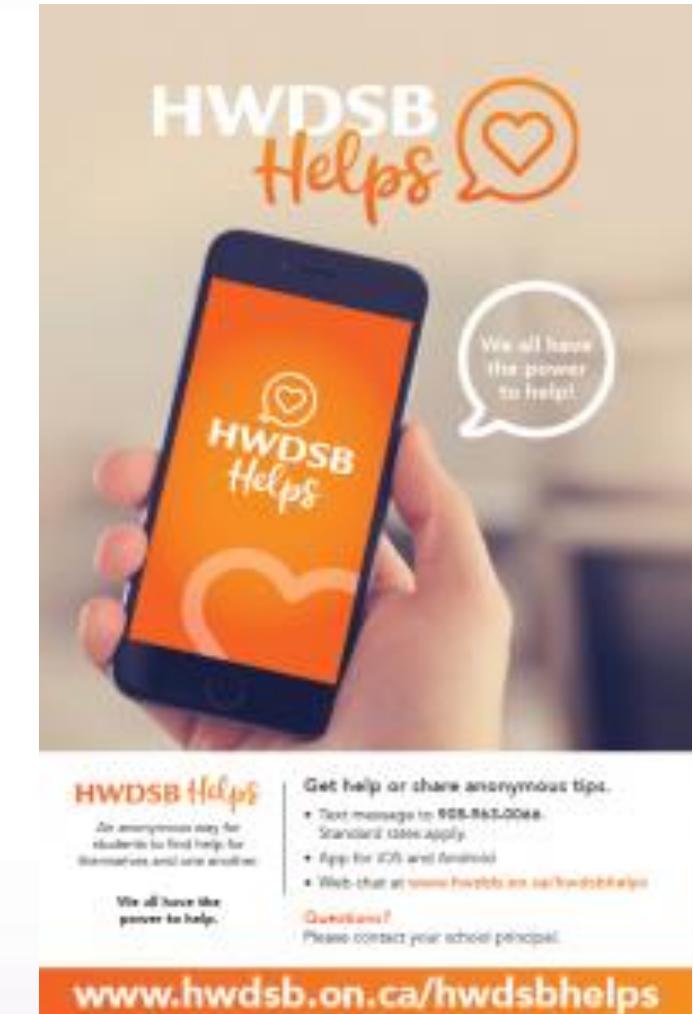
- “The bully is my friend.”
- “It’s not my problem and someone else will report or stop the bullying.”
- “The victim is not my friend.”
- “The victim is a loser.”
- “The victim ‘deserved’ to be bullied.”

What can I do if I suspect my child may be a bystander to bullying?

- Encourage
- Explain
- Help
- Teach
- Accompany
- Reinforce

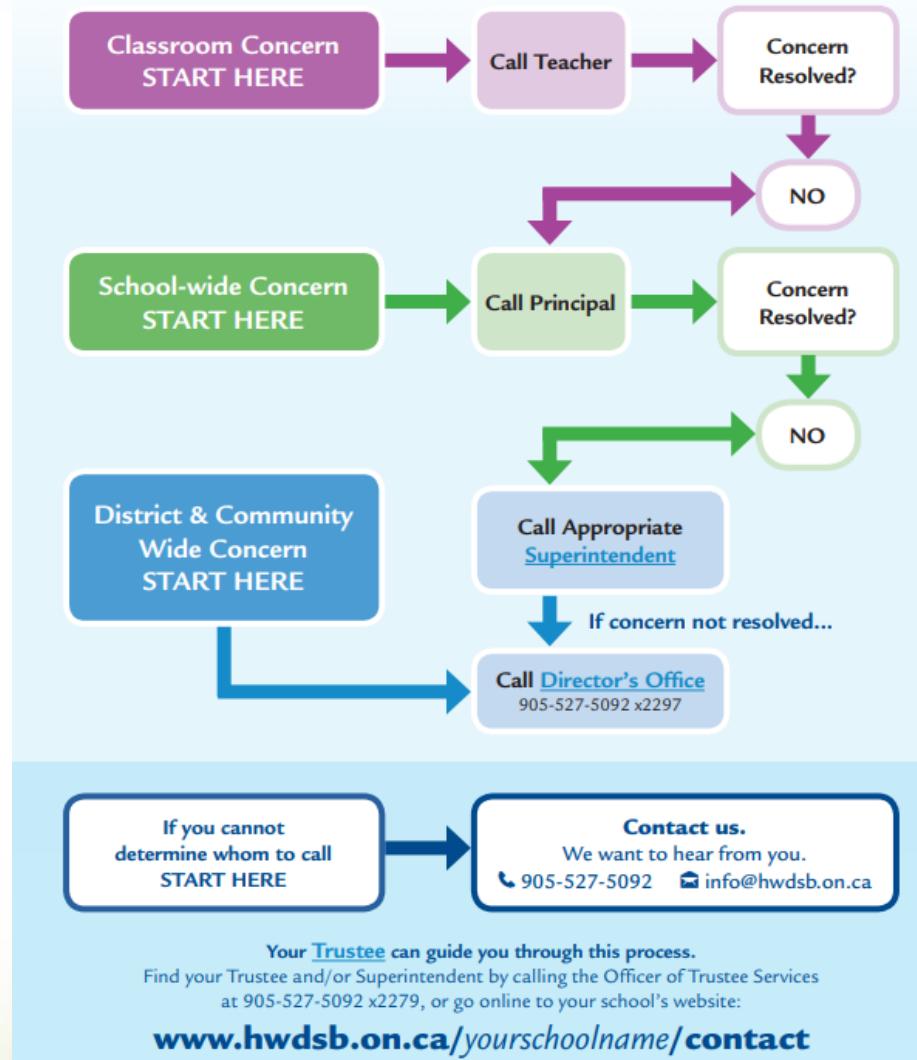
What if my child does not want to report bullying?

- *HWDSB Helps* is a service at HWDSB that uses mobile technology, for the anonymous sharing of tips
- The service receives anonymous messages by text, web chat and a smartphone app.



A positive school climate exists when all members of a school community feel safe, supported and accepted.

The best way to do this is to be proactive in our approach. During 2019/20 all schools are implementing Emotion Coaching as a way to further support positive relationships in classrooms.



Have a Concern? Chart is found online at www.hwdsb.on.ca

Thank You

www.hwdsb.on.ca/safeschools

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