

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Procedure

Schools will incorporate the following procedures/guidelines into their School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Strategies

Principals are required by legislation to review annually with all staff the duty to respond to all incidents of bullying, as well as the duty to report serious incidents of bullying. Serious incidents of bullying include, but are not limited to racist, sexual, sexist, and homophobic remarks slurs, jokes, or graffiti, prolonged or repeated social and cyberbullying, as well as incidents that could lead to suspensions and/or expulsions.

RATIONALE:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) believes that every student has the right to be treated with dignity and respect and to feel safe within the school environment. The research concerning the safe and orderly correlate of effective schools currently being implemented by Hamilton-Wentworth schools supports this belief. Students who are free from bullying are able to give their education the full attention and effort needed for success.

Bullying behaviour adversely affects not only the learning environment of a school but can lead to more serious violence, as well as long-term social and emotional problems not only for those powerless individuals who are the victims of repeated aggression, but for those who perpetrate it and also for those who see it happening.

Bullying will not be tolerated on Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board property, at school related activities, on school buses, or in any other circumstances (e.g. on-line) where engaging in bullying behaviour will have a negative impact on healthy relationships and the school climate.

At Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board we believe that it is everyone's responsibility to stop bullying behaviour within the school community.

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,
 - 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,

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Procedure

- 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.

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

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Procedure

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.

PROCEDURES:

1.0 Staff, Student, Parental Responsibilities

All members of the school community have responsibility for bullying prevention and for addressing bullying when it occurs. Although this responsibility rests with all members of the school community, some members have responsibility to provide leadership in specific areas/situations.

1.1 Staff

All staff members within Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will:

- model caring, respectful interactions
- raise awareness of bullying behaviour and its long-term effect on all students
- recognize that creating a positive school climate is key in the prevention of bullying behaviours in schools
- develop and share a clear and developmentally appropriate definition of bullying behaviour, based on the definition in this policy procedure
- include bullying prevention as a regular item on staff meeting agendas

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Procedure

- provide support to new students to ensure that they understand expectations and routines
- provide opportunities for positive student leadership for all students
- encourage students to report bullying behaviours. Teach students the difference between tattling/ratting (getting someone into trouble) and telling (helping someone who is in trouble)
- develop a safe and anonymous way for students to report bullying (drop box, phone line, and website)
- take every report of bullying seriously
- respond to all incidents of bullying, if it is safe to do so in their opinion, by labeling and intervening quickly to any bullying behaviour of which they are aware
- engage bystanders – teach skills needed to deal with bullying situations positively and safely
- work with students and parents to resolve bullying issues in a timely and developmentally appropriate manner
- teach students pro-social behaviours and prompt and reinforce them throughout the school day
- provide intervention and support to assist students who engage in bullying behaviours to change their behaviours
- communicate to students and parents that a student who is engaged in bullying conduct will be subject to a range of interventions, including suspension or expulsion
- develop a safe intervention plan for students who are victims of bullying;
- report incidents of bullying to the Principal if the bullying may lead to suspension or expulsion

1.2 Students

All students within Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will:

- treat everyone with dignity and respect
- raise their awareness and understanding of bullying behaviour and its long-term effects
- realize that bullying behaviour is never acceptable
- report incidents of bullying behaviour whenever they see it
- engage in positive leadership opportunities
- provide support to new students or students who are alone/friendless
- endeavour to disengage from being a bystander to bullying behaviours
- actively support their school's bullying prevention and intervention programs
- support a positive school climate

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Procedure

1.3 Parents

All parents of students within Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will:

- treat everyone with dignity and respect
- report incidents of bullying behaviour whenever they see it
- raise their awareness and understanding of bullying behaviour and its long-term effects
- in partnership with the school staff, work to address and rectify incidents of bullying behaviour (whether the parent of the student who is victimized, engaging in bullying behaviour, or bystander to bullying incidents)
- create awareness among their children/youth that bullying is never acceptable
- endeavour to get appropriate social/emotional help for their child if necessary
- support their school's anti bullying initiatives
- encourage their children/youth to report incidents of bullying behaviour
- model caring and respectful interactions
- teach their children/youth to be respectful and caring individual

2.0 Responding By Board Employees To Incidents That May Lead To Bullying

- 2.1 All Board employees who work directly with students must respond to any inappropriate and disrespectful student behaviours, including bullying, that is likely to have a negative impact on school climate, if it is safe to do so, in the employee's opinion. (Education Act Part X111,300.4)
- 2.2 Board employees who work directly with students include administrators, teachers, and nonteaching staff (including staff in social work, child and youth, psychology, and related areas, educational assistants, early childhood educators etc.).
- 2.3 Responding may include: asking a student to stop the behaviour, naming the behaviour and explaining why it is inappropriate and/or disrespectful, and asking the student to correct the behaviour (e.g. apologize for a hurtful comment and/or to rephrase a comment).

***Note: Board employees are not required to respond to incidents when, in their opinion, responding would cause immediate physical harm to themselves, a student, or to another person.**

3.0 Reporting By Board Employees To Bullying Incidents

- 3.1 All Board employees who work directly with students must report all incidents of bullying to the Principal. The purpose of reporting serious student incidents to the principal is to ensure that the principal is aware of any activities taking place in the school for which suspension or expulsion must be considered and to help ensure a positive school climate.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Procedure

- 3.2 Board employees who work directly with students include administrators, teachers, and nonteaching staff (including staff in social work, child and youth, psychology and related areas, educational assistants, early childhood educators, etc.). bus drivers, and employees, and employees and contractors of third party operators providing before/after school programs for Full Day Kindergarten on the school site must also report incidents of bullying.
- 3.3 *Verbal Reports:* A verbal report must be made to the Principal for incidents for which suspension or expulsion would not be considered. The verbal report is to be made as soon as possible following the incident.
- 3.4 *Written Reports:* For incidents of bullying for which suspension or expulsion must be considered, Board employees must report to the principal as soon as is reasonably possible, and in any case, no later than the end of the school day. Board employees must confirm their report in writing using the Ministry Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form Part 1. The written report is to be submitted as soon as possible and in any case within 24 hours of the incident.

4.0 Principal Response To Reports

- 4.1 After a report is submitted, the Principal is required to:
- provide a written acknowledgement of the receipt of the report using the Ministry Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form Part II to the employee who reported. Information that could identify the student(s) involved must not be part of the acknowledgement
 - indicate if the investigation is “completed” or “in progress”
 - investigate reported incidents of specified activities that may lead to suspension or expulsion, including bullying
 - communicate the results of an investigation to the teacher who reported the incident or, if reported by another employee, to that employee unless it would not be appropriate to do so
 - notify the parent/guardian of a student who the principal believes has been harmed as a result of a specified activity
 - notify the parent/guardian of any student who engaged in the activity that resulted in harm.
- 4.2 Principals must suspend a student and consider referring that student for expulsion for any incident under subsection 306(1) of the Education Act, including bullying, that is motivated by bias, prejudice, or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other similar factor (e.g. socio-economic status, appearance).

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Procedure

- 4.3 Principals must suspend a student for bullying and consider referring that student for expulsion for any incident if (i) the student has previously been suspended for bullying, and (ii) the student's continuing presence in the school creates, in the principal's opinion, an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person. When both of these conditions are met, the principal must suspend the student and consider referring the student for an expulsion hearing.
- 4.4 If no further action is taken by the Principal, there is no requirement to retain the report and it should be destroyed. The report is not to go in the Ontario School Record (OSR).
- 4.5 If action* is taken, the form and documentation must be kept in the students Ontario School Record (OSR) for a minimum of one year, and,
- the names of all the other students appearing on the form (aggressors and victims) must be removed except the name of the student in whose OSR the form is going
 - nothing about the incident is to go into the victim's OSR unless the victim/parent of the victim specifically request that this is done
 - where the student who has been bullied has also engaged in a serious student incident, information regarding the incident and the action taken and documentation will be placed in the student's OSR for a minimum of one year.

Note: This formal report does not replace conversations between the employee and the Principal. The Principal and the employee are encouraged to talk about the incident regardless of action taken.

*Possible actions taken can include anything on the progressive discipline continuum (e.g. warning, contacting parent/guardian, removal of privileges, suspension, expulsion).

5.0 Notice To Parent/Guardian (Section 300.3(3) Ed. Act)

5.1 Of Students who have Been Harmed

- 5.1.1 Principals are required to inform parent/guardian of students who have been harmed as a result of any serious student incident for which suspension or expulsion must be considered. Principals shall disclose the following information:
- 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 the activity
 - the supports that will be provided for the student in response to the harm that resulted from the activity (e.g. safe intervention plan)

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Procedure

5.2 Of Students who have Engaged in Serious Incidents

5.2.1 Principals are required to inform the parent/guardian of students who have engaged in serious student incidents. Principals shall disclose the following information:

- 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.)

5.3 Principals must invite parents/guardians to have a discussion with him/her about the supports that will be provided for their child.

5.4 Principals are not permitted to inform the parents of a victim when, in the Principal's opinion, doing so would put the victim at risk of harm from the parent. If the Principal decides not to notify the parent/guardian, the Principal must:

- consult with the manager of student services for further advice
- document the rationale for the decision not to notify the parent/guardian of the student
- inform the school Supervisory Officer of this decision
- if a teacher reported the harm to the principal, inform the teacher of the decision
- if it is determined it is appropriate to do so, inform other Board employees of the decision not to notify a parent/guardian of the student

5.5 Principals must not disclose the name of the aggressor or any other identifying or personal information with the parents/guardians of the victim or harmer beyond what is listed above (e.g. referral to counselling or any other personal information).

5.6 If a staff person has any reasonable grounds to suspect that a student, who is under the age of 16, is or may be in need of protection from the person having charge of him or her, the staff person must report this directly to the CAS, and not rely on any other person to report on his or her behalf.

6.0 Supports For Victims Of Serious Student Incidents (incidents leading to suspension or expulsion: Education Act Subsection 306(1) or 310(1))

6.1 All Board employees must take allegations of gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment, and inappropriate sexual behaviour (PPM145) and bullying (PPM144) seriously and act in a timely, sensitive, and supportive manner.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Procedure

- 6.2 Board employees working directly with students must support all students, including those who disclose/report such incidents by:
- providing contact information about professional supports (e.g. community agency)
 - making this information readily available to students who may wish to discuss issues of healthy relationships, gender identity, and sexuality (e.g. public health)
 - providing parents with student services pamphlet if they are not satisfied with the supports their child receives
 - contacting the manager of student services for assistance in referring students to a community agency for confidential support when his/her parents/guardians are not notified (e.g. Sexual Assault Centre, Kids Help Phone, LGBT Youth Line)
 - developing specific student plans to protect the student (e.g. safe intervention plans)
- 6.3 When the Board (in consultation with the Principal) determines that it is necessary to separate students to preserve school safety or to protect a student, it is preferable that the victim not be moved, unless the victim/parent/guardian makes a specific request to do so.

7.0 Prevention Strategies

7.1 Positive School Climate

- 7.1.1 A positive school climate is defined by the Ministry of Education as “the sum total of all the personal relationships within a school.” When these relationships are founded in mutual acceptance and inclusion, and modeled by all, a culture of respect becomes the norm. A positive school climate exists when all members of a school community feel safe, comfortable, and accepted.
- 7.1.2 All schools will develop programs that actively promote and support positive behaviours and reflect Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board’s Character Education development initiatives.
- 7.1.3 Schools will support students who want to establish and lead activities or organizations that promote a safe and inclusive learning environment, the acceptance and respect for others and the creation of a positive school climate. The name of any activity or organization must be consistent with the promotion of a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all students. Principals may not refuse the name of gay-straight alliance or a similar name for certain organizations.

7.2 Teaching Strategies

- 7.2.1 Teaching strategies will be used that focus on developing healthy relationships including curriculum-linked bullying prevention and intervention in daily classroom teaching.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Procedure

7.3 Code of Conduct

- 7.3.1 All members of the school will become familiar with and demonstrate understanding of the Board's and School's Code of Conduct which sets out expected standards for behaviour.

7.4 Partnerships with Community Agencies and Businesses:

- 7.4.1 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.

7.5 Safe and Accepting Schools Teams (an existing school committee/team, e.g. Healthy Action Team, Healthy Schools Team, can assume this role):

- Each school shall have a Safe and Accepting Schools Team.
- The Safe and Accepting Schools Team shall be composed of at least one of: each of the following, parent, teacher, student, support staff, community partner, and principal.
- The Chair of the Team must be a staff member.
- The Team monitors and reviews the school climate, including data from the mandatory safe schools' survey administered every two years, and recommends appropriate interventions/preventions as needed.
- The Committee should use 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.

7.6 Training

- 7.6.1 Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will continue to provide bullying prevention and intervention training to staff and students. Locally, schools are encouraged to provide programs for parents on bullying prevention and intervention.
- 7.6.2 Students will also be provided with training on bullying prevention and on leadership initiatives within their own schools. Training will include a focus on cultural sensitivity, respect for diversity, and special needs. Schools will implement their plans to promote a positive school climate, with support from the Board.

8.0 School Plans

- 8.1 Each school shall develop and implement school climate plans including bullying prevention and intervention plans as part of the school improvement planning.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Procedure

8.2 These plans must include:

- the definition of bullying
- prevention strategies
- intervention strategies
- communication strategies
- monitoring and review process, including data from the School Climate (Safe, Equitable and Inclusive) surveys to be completed every two years.

9.0 Board Plan

9.1 The Board will develop and implement a multi-year safe schools plan with implementation to begin September 2013.

10.0 Monitor and Review

10.1 The Board will establish a monitoring and review process to determine the effectiveness of this Policy. The multi-year plan will be reviewed annually to respond to trends/data within the Board.

10.2 The Safe and Accepting Schools Team is to review the school plan and results of the school climate survey. Areas of concern are to be addressed annually in the school plan.