

HWDSB

Media Release

For Immediate Release

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Offers New Supports, Initiatives and Training Leading up to Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week

Hamilton, Ontario – November 15, 2019: Ahead of Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week (Nov. 18-22), Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) is launching new resources and initiatives around bullying prevention and intervention for its students, parents and staff.

“To help ensure that all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable and accepted, we are adding new initiatives and supports to the many existing practices already in place in our schools,” said Manny Figueiredo, Director of Education.

“We’ve heard from the community and our staff that to tackle the complex challenge of bullying, the more focus and support the better. We are committed to offering and facilitating dedicated opportunities to share information, learn from others and work toward improving our approach.”

The following new initiatives are planned:

- A dedicated public website that will house all guides and supports used in our schools for bullying prevention and intervention so everyone in the community will have access.
- Training all school staff on Emotion Coaching, a method that helps students self-regulate and gain skills to use when feeling challenged.
- A mandatory full-day meeting of principals and vice-principals dedicated to bullying prevention, intervention, responding and reporting.
- A new educational and awareness package created for parents that includes material (a fridge magnet and postcard) explaining methods of reporting bullying and advice for families navigating a bullying concern.
- New targeted classroom activities and modules for students during Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week. Each day will focus on a different aspect of bullying prevention and intervention (i.e. What is bullying? What can I do if I am being bullied? How do I know if I’m being a bully? What can we do if we know someone is being bullied? What am I/my class doing to stop bullying?).
- Redeployment of *HWDSB Helps*, a free and anonymous way for students to find help for themselves and one another using text, web and app conversations, to ensure that all students are fully aware of the service. The app will be installed on all student iPads and

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linked to HWDSB's student online learning platform. Each student will be taken through the process of how to report via the app in the classroom.

- Dedicated training for all teachers during the PA Day on November 29. The training will be focused on "Relationships, Caring/Important Adults and Addressing Bullying."
- Creating a parent conference on Safe Schools, to occur in early 2020.

Additionally, as announced recently, HWDSB has appointed an independent and specialized team to lead the work of a Safe Schools: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Review Panel. The review panel will provide independent feedback and recommendations on how to prevent, intervene, respond to and report bullying.

The Review Panel's role is to coordinate, facilitate, and gather input and feedback from stakeholders about the broader concern of bullying in HWDSB and our community. Stakeholders will include students, parents/caregivers/guardians, staff, community partners, and partners. The resulting report, expected in May 2020, will be made public.

Learn more about Safe Schools at HWDSB online at www.hwdsb.on.ca/safeschools

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