

Whistleblower Procedure

RATIONALE:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) is committed to providing learning and working environments that are welcoming, respectful, accessible, and free from discrimination and harassment.

The objective of this procedure is to set out the process involved in reporting and investigating reports of suspected wrongdoing to those who come forward under the Whistleblower Policy, in good faith, if they have reasonable information or concerns with respect to human rights violations, poisoned environment, conflicts of interest, child protection, violence, harassment, bullying, alleged illegal practices, questionable financial or operational transactions or any breach of Board policy or procedure.

The [Whistleblower Policy](#) and Procedure do not affect or replace any duty or the right of any person to exercise their rights under other Board policies and procedures including but not limited to [Human Rights Policy](#), [Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention Policy](#), [Workplace Harassment Prevention Procedure](#) and [Workplace Violence Prevention Procedure](#), collective agreements, the Ontario Human Rights Code, and/or access the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal processes.

TERMINOLOGY:

Conflict of Interest: A potential, apparent or actual conflict where an employee or trustee's financial or other personal interest, whether direct or indirect, conflicts or appears to conflict with the employee's responsibility to the Board or with the participation in any recommendation or decision pertaining to hiring within the Board.

Conflict of Interest – Relationship: Any relationship of the employee to persons of their immediate family whether related by blood, adoption, marriage or common-law relationship, and any relationship of an intimate and/or financial nature during the preceding five years, any student-supervisor relationship or any other past or present relationship that may give rise to a reasonable apprehension of bias.

Executive Council: The senior team of HWDSB, including director, Associate Directors, Superintendents, Human Rights and Equity Advisor and Indigenous Education Lead.

Good Faith: A sincere belief or motive without any malice or the desire to defraud others.

HWDSB Community: Students, employees, parents, guardians, caregivers, trustees, community advisory committee members, school council members, permit holders, vendors, service providers, contractors, volunteers, visitors and all other persons who are invited to access and/or provide services or attend Board and school events. It also includes any person or organization who enters into an agreement with HWDSB or uses Board property.

HWDSB Environment: Board property, schools, school buses, virtual or digital learning and

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working environments, social media, school or work-related events or activities, before- and after-school programs, extracurricular activities, co-instructional activities and excursions. It may include any other locations outside HWDSB that may have an impact on the school or work climate.

Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC): The Code prohibits actions that discriminate against people based on a protected ground in a protected social area.

Protected Grounds:

- Age.
- Ancestry.
- Citizenship.
- Colour.
- Creed (includes religion).
- Disability (including mental, physical, developmental, or learning disabilities).
- Ethnic origin.
- Family status (such as a parent-child relationship, elder relationships).
- Gender Identity and Gender Expression.
- Marital status, including the status of being married, single, widowed, divorced, separated or living in a conjugal relationship outside of marriage, whether in a same sex or opposite sex relationship.
- Place of origin.
- Race.
- Sex including pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- Sexual Orientation.
- Record of offences including a criminal conviction for a provincial offence, or for an offence for which a pardon has been received (applies to employment only).
- Socio-economic status (not a protected ground under the Code but protected under the HWDSB Human Rights Policy).

Protected Social Areas:

- Accommodation (housing).
- Contracts.
- Employment.
- Goods, services and facilities.
- Membership in unions and trade or professional associations.

Poisoned Environment: A negative, hostile or unpleasant learning or work environment created due to comments, conduct or activities that harass or discriminate against a person or a group. It might not be directed at a specific individual. A poisoned environment may result from a series of incidents or a single serious incident. Allowing inappropriate behavior to continue and failing to adequately remedy and restore the environment following the incident(s) may result in poisoned environment.

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Reasonable Information: Any information that is based on sound judgement and is fair and valid.

Reprisal: An action or threat that is intended as retaliation or punishment for making a report of wrongdoing.

Whistleblower: A person who brings forward information of suspected wrongdoing through the whistleblower process.

Wrongdoing:

- Violation of laws, acts or legislation (e.g., Ontario Human Rights Code, Criminal Code of Canada).
- Serious breach of the HWDSB Code of Conduct or existing HWDSB policies and procedures.
- Misuse of public funds or public assets.
- Mismanagement or abuse of positional power.
- Doing something that creates a significant danger to physical or mental health, safety or the life of a person or persons.
- Time theft (e.g., An employee collects pay for time not actually worked).
- Knowingly directing, counseling or pressuring a person to commit wrongdoing.

The above list is to help guide the HWDSB Community as to the kind of conduct that is considered wrongdoing under the policy and procedure. The HWDSB Community is encouraged to contact the third-party whistleblower service at <http://www.integritycountsca.org/hwdsb> or the hotline at 1-866-921-6714.

PROCEDURES:

1.0 Reporting a Whistleblower Incident

- 1.1 A Whistleblower should communicate an act of suspected wrongdoing when they become aware of such a situation.
- 1.2 A Whistleblower should report a suspected wrongdoing to the confidential third-party whistleblower service at <http://www.integritycountsca.org/hwdsb>. A Whistleblower can file a report by phone, online or by mail. All three options will be available on the third-party website.
- 1.3 Members of the HWDSB Community may call the hotline and speak to an agent in the language of their choice to report a suspected wrongdoing.

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- 1.4 Members of the HWDSB Community may use the HWDSB Whistleblower Report Form (Appendix A) to file their report. This form is the same as the report that can be filed online and by phone. All three avenues of reporting will be translated into the five (5) most commonly spoken languages in HWDSB schools, as reported in the HWDSB Student Census (2022).
- 1.5 The Whistleblower should provide as much information as possible to enable the Board to follow up in an efficient matter and assess the whistleblower report.
- 1.6 The external third party will receive all whistleblower reports and after initial assessment for clarity, redirect the report to Privacy and Information Management Officer to review.
- 1.7 Anonymous reports will be accepted and investigated to the best of the Board's ability based on the information shared with the third-party company.
- 1.8 Information received by Integrity Counts is protected in accordance with the Whistleblower Policy, the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) and HWDSB's [Privacy Policy](#).

2.0 Support for the Whistleblower

- 2.1 All members of the HWDSB Community should use this procedure to report suspected wrongdoing to the Board.
- 2.2 Anyone who reports suspected wrongdoing to Integrity Counts will receive information about supports available to individuals who were subjected to the alleged wrongdoing.
- 2.3 Once the whistleblower report is received by the third-party company, the Whistleblower will be provided with information about supports available including:
 - a. Staff Resource List (Appendix C).
 - b. Community Supports and Mental Health Resources for Parents and Caregivers (Appendix D).
 - c. Community Supports and Mental Health Resources for Children and Youth (Appendix E).

3.0 Investigation of a Whistleblower Report

- 3.1 The Privacy and Information Management Officer is the designated Board official who will initially review whistleblower reports once received from Integrity Counts.
- 3.2 The Privacy and Information Management Officer will conduct an initial review of the report and determine whether the report falls under the definition of wrongdoing.

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- 3.3 Once reviewed, the Privacy and Information Management Officer will direct the whistleblower report to an internal department for further investigation:
 - a. Human Rights Office (for labour/employment related matters or to investigate the report under the [Human Rights Policy](#) and [Human Rights Complaints Resolution Procedure](#)).
 - b. Human Resource Services (to investigate the report under our [Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy](#), [Workplace Harassment Prevention Procedure](#) and [Workplace Violence Prevention Procedure](#)).
 - c. The appropriate Family of Schools Superintendent's office.
 - d. The Director of Education's office.
- 3.4 Where an employee who is part of Executive Council is named in the whistleblower report, the reported information will be provided to the Director. The Director may use a third-party investigator to investigate the report of suspected wrongdoing.
- 3.5 If an individual's concern(s) involves the Director, the Chair of the Board shall engage an independent third party to further investigate the report of suspected wrongdoing.
- 3.6 If a whistleblower report involves the Board or any trustee, the Board may create an investigation subcommittee, employ the services of a third party to conduct the investigation, or retain legal counsel to manage the review in accordance with the Trustee Code of Conduct.
- 3.7 If an individual's concern(s) involves the Privacy and Information Management Officer, the Director will be provided the report and the matter may be investigated by either internal or external resources.
- 3.8 An individual who is the subject of the suspected wrongdoing in a whistleblower report will participate in the investigation and be able to respond to report of alleged wrongdoing. If applicable, the individual will be supported by their respective union or a support person throughout the investigation process. The individual will be provided with the results of the investigation and any next steps upon closure of the investigation according to the applicable procedure.
- 3.9 The Whistleblower will receive regular and on-going, timely communication to ensure they are aware of the investigation process and how their report is being addressed. Further supports will be offered to the Whistleblower and the individual who is the subject of suspected wrongdoing throughout the investigation process.

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4.0 Contents of a Whistleblower Report

- 4.1 The whistleblower report should be factual and provide as much detail as possible about the whistleblower incident. The whistleblower report should provide a description of the concern, along with names, dates, witnesses and the evidence the Whistleblower has identified.
- 4.2 A reasonable review and proper investigation may be impractical without sufficient information being provided in the whistleblower report.
- 4.3 A Whistleblower has reprisal protection. Therefore, the Whistleblower is asked to disclose their identity when reporting a whistleblower incident, because an anonymous whistleblower report may not contain sufficient information to reasonably support a full and thorough investigation. Anonymous reports will still be investigated to the best of the Board's ability according to the appropriate Board procedure as outlined above.

5.0 Outcome of the Investigation

- 5.1 The Whistleblower will receive notification of the completion of the investigation according to the procedure through which the alleged wrongdoing was investigated.
- 5.2 Subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), the Privacy and Information Management Officer or designate will inform the Whistleblower that the complaint is resolved to the best of the Board's ability according to the appropriate procedure.
- 5.3 Upon the completion of the investigation of the suspected wrongdoing, the Whistleblower will be asked for their feedback about the process. The feedback will be used to provide greater supports for the Whistleblower where needed and to strengthen Board procedures and communications for the Whistleblower. A summary of feedback will be shared semi-annually as part of the larger report about implementation of the Whistleblower Policy and Procedure. This report is presented to the Audit Committee and available to the public.
- 5.4 If the Whistleblower is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they may submit a request to the Director or Designate to have the outcome reviewed. Further, if their complaint was addressed either by the Human Rights Complaint Resolution Procedure or Workplace Harassment Prevention Procedure, the Whistleblower would follow the appeal process as outlined within either procedure.

6.0 Confidentiality and Protection from Reprisal

- 6.1 A whistleblower report will be treated in a sensitive manner.

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- 6.2 The Board may be required to inform external parties (e.g., regulatory colleges, Children's Aid Societies, police services) of an alleged whistleblower incident, at any stage following receipt of the complaint.
- 6.3 Reprisals against a Whistleblower or any witness acting in good faith are prohibited.
- 6.4 An individual found to have carried out a reprisal may be disciplined up to and including termination in the case of a Board employee(s), or the relationship with the Board may be terminated, subject to sanction or legal proceedings in the case of Trustees, students, volunteers, vendors, contractors and partner organizations.
- 6.5 An individual who is found to have committed one or more of the following may be disciplined up to and including termination in the case of a Board employee(s), or the relationship with the Board may be terminated, subject to sanction or legal proceedings in the case of Trustees, students, volunteers, vendors, contractors and partner organizations:
- A whistleblower incident.
 - Obstructing the investigation.
 - Making false statements.
 - Falsifying, destroying or concealing information that may be relevant to an investigation, or counseling another person to do so.
- 6.6 If the employee is a regulated professional, the Board may report the wrongdoing to the appropriate profession's regulatory body in accordance with the Board's legal obligations.

7.0 Records

- 7.1 Records relevant to the whistleblower incident and the investigation will be preserved by the Board.
- 7.2 Relevant records including reports, records of discussions and supporting information shall remain in the custody of the Privacy and Information Management Officer or designate for at least seven years.

8.0 Abuse of Process or Failure to Act in Good Faith

- 8.1 A Whistleblower who intentionally makes false accusations in reporting of a whistleblower incident is not protected under the Whistleblower Policy.
- 8.2 An individual who makes an unsubstantiated report that is knowingly false or made with malicious intent will be subject to discipline up to and including termination in the case

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of employees or the relationship with the Board may be terminated, subject to sanction, or legal proceedings in the case of Trustees, service providers, students, volunteers, vendors, contractors and partner organizations.

9.0 Evaluation

- 9.1 The Whistleblower Procedure will be consistency monitored and reviewed to ensure Whistleblowers are bringing forward reports of suspected wrongdoing without reprisal.
- 9.2 All Whistleblowers will be provided with evaluation tool to gather feedback on their experience through this procedure. The Director of Education or designate will receive all feedback about the process.
- 9.3 The Director will review the Whistleblower Procedure regularly to ensure no reprisals have occurred through feedback provided by Whistleblowers following the completion of the investigation.
- 9.4 The Director or designate will provide semi-annual reports to the Audit Committee about the implementation of the Whistleblower Policy and this procedure, a summary of non-identifiable submissions data and general findings.
- 9.5 The Director or designate will receive all complaints about the Whistleblower Procedure and review for potential action.



HWDSB Whistleblower Report Form

In accordance with the [HWDSB Whistleblower Policy](#)
and the HWDSB Whistleblower Procedure

BACKGROUND

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) is committed to providing learning and working environments that are welcoming, respectful, accessible, and free from discrimination and harassment. HWDSB will provide supports and protections from unfair disciplinary actions or reprisals to those who come forward under the Whistleblower Policy if they have reasonable information or concerns with respect to human rights violations, poisoned environment, conflicts of interest, child protection, violence, harassment, bullying, alleged illegal practices, questionable financial or operational transactions or any breach of Board policy or procedure.

REPORTING TO HWDSB

IntegrityCounts receives all HWDSB Whistleblower reports. Any act that is considered a suspected wrongdoing by an employee should be reported to this confidential third-party whistleblower service at <https://www.integritycounts.ca/> or the hotline at 1-866-921-6714. Members of the HWDSB Community can also submit this HWDSB Whistleblower Form by Canada Post to PO Box 91880, West Vancouver, British Columbia, V7V 4S4 Canada or by fax 1-604-926-5668.

PART A: WHISTLEBLOWER CONTACT INFORMATION

Please identify your association to HWDSB:

- ☐ Student
- ☐ Staff
- ☐ Parent, guardian, caregiver
- ☐ Trustee
- ☐ Community advisory committee member
- ☐ School council members
- ☐ Permit holder,
- ☐ Vendor
- ☐ Service provider
- ☐ Contractor
- ☐ Volunteers
- ☐ Other (Please explain): _____

Name:		Contact Phone Number:	
Address:		Contact Email:	

PART B: WHISTLEBLOWER REPORT

Please describe the alleged whistleblower incident. Please share details where the incident occurred, who was involved, and how the incident occurred. Please attach any additional information to this report prior to submitting this report to IntegrityCounts.

Location

Enter the location where the incident happened and identify the department that best identifies where the incident took place.

Location of incident:	
Department:	

When did it happen?

Identify the date of the occurrence(s) and whether this information has been reports to a supervisor in the past below:

Date of occurrence(s):		
Has this case been reported to a supervisor in the past?	Yes	No

Case Types

From the list below, please select the category that you feel best matches the issue(s) in your report.

- ☐ Violation of laws, acts or legislation (e.g., Ontario Human Rights Code, Criminal Code of Conduct).
- ☐ Serious breach of the HWDSB Code of Conduct or existing HWDSB policies and procedures.
- ☐ Misuse of public funds or public assets.
- ☐ Mismanagement or abuse of positional power.
- ☐ Doing something that creates a significant danger to physical or mental health, safety or the life of a person or persons.
- ☐ Time theft (e.g., An employee collects pay for time not actually worked).
- ☐ Knowingly directing, counseling or pressuring a person to commit wrongdoing.
- ☐ Other: _____

PART C: WHISTLEBLOWER REPORT

Please describe the alleged whistleblower incident below by answering the following questions. If there is more than one alleged incident, please submit as many reports as necessary.

Describe the wrongdoing.	
When and where did the alleged wrongdoing occur?	
For how long has this wrongdoing been occurring?	
Who committed the alleged wrongdoing? List all the people involved in the case.	
How did you come to know about this alleged wrongdoing?	

PART D: OTHER INFORMATION & EVIDENCE

<p>Has this wrongdoing been reported to anyone outside of HWDSB such as police, media or a Government Agency?</p>	
<p>Has this wrongdoing been reported to anyone inside the HWDSB such as the Human Rights Office, Human Resource Services, the Superintendent's Office or other individual?</p>	
<p>Is there any other information you would like to provide IntegrityCounts to support your report?</p>	

Collection Notice

The information collected on this form is used to investigate and respond to concerns submitted by the HWDSB community related to the HWDSB Whistleblower [Policy](#) and Procedure.

IntegrityCounts and HWDSB are committed to the security and confidentiality of the information that you share, to protecting anonymity should you choose to remain anonymous, and to the protection of your privacy with respect to any personal information that you provide through this confidential reporting system. Information received by IntegrityCounts is protected in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ([MFIPPA](#)) and HWDSB's [Privacy Policy](#).

Questions

If you have any questions related to the information collected for the Whistleblower Reporting Process or specific to a report that you have submitted, please contact IntegrityCounts directly on the toll-free hotline 1-866-921-6714 to speak with an IntegrityCounts agent.

HWDSB

Staff Wellness Resource List

Exploring Supports for HWDSB Staff

Here at HWDSB, we acknowledge that navigating life can be a challenging and complex emotional process. We want to assure you that we value an organizational environment that is open and transparent and conducts operations with integrity, and that you are not alone. We would like to provide you with some of the supports available to you through HWDSB, and within the greater Hamilton area. On the following page you will find a shortlist of resources that you are able to access within our community, and you can find a more extensive database with culturally responsive supports in our [Comprehensive Community Resource List](#) found on our [Staff Wellness page](#).

If you are at IMMEDIATE risk of serious harm or life-threatening emergency - please call **911** instead of the listed resources.

Homewood Health

All staff (including casual and non-union), as well as their dependents, have access to free and confidential resources from our Employee and Family Assistance Provider (EFAP), Homewood Health. Services include counselling, coaching, information, and support. Homewood Health strives to infuse an anti-oppressive, anti-colonial, and anti-racist approach within their organization. Within their network they have clinically vetted experts who have a specialty in working with various sociodemographic groups including: Indigenous, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+, and more. When an HWDSB employee calls Homewood Health to access one of their services, they can request a clinician with expertise in racial trauma, as well as request a clinician based on culture, language preference, and gender.



Invitation Code: HDS807
1-800-663-1142
homeweb.ca

What to Expect When Calling Homewood Health

- Initially you will be asked to select if you are calling about a crisis, to initiate a new service or case, or if this is to follow up on an existing case.
- You will be then be connected to speak with a Homewood Health Intake Counsellor, who, will ask basic, initial questions such as your name, date of birth, and associated organization.
- The Intake Counsellor will next explore your needs, which will begin by going through risk and safety screening questions. These non-judgmental questions are required safety standards and asked of everyone for best clinical care practices, and may include questions regarding self-harm, safety, and substance use.

Community Services

Sexual Assault Centre of Hamilton (SACHA)

24-hour support line offering confidential and anonymous non-judgmental telephone support to anyone who has experienced sexual violence at any point in their lives.
sacha.ca
905-525-4162

Barrett Centre for Crisis Support

24-hour crisis line providing a safe environment for anyone in the community experiencing a mental health or substance abuse crisis.
goodshepherdcentres.ca/services/barrett-centre-for-crisis-support
905-529-7878

Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre (HARRC)

Provides direct support and community resource referral services for racialized individuals experiencing racism.
harrc.ca
905-525-9140 x. 20464

Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg

Culturally safe call centre that connects Indigenous residents in Hamilton to resources, including mental health supports.
niwasa.ca
905-549-4884

Native Women's Centre

Provides safe shelter for all women who are experiencing crisis in their lives due to family violence, homelessness, or conflict with the law.
nativewomenscentre.com
1-888-308-6559

Refuge Newcomer Health

Provides primary healthcare services, including mental health support, to new Canadians and to those who face barriers in accessing culturally-appropriate healthcare services.
newcomerhealth.ca
905-526-0000

Hamilton Transgender Community

Providing connections to confidential information, advocacy, resources, and support meetings to assist transgendered and gender non-conforming folks and their allies.
facebook.com/HamiltonTransCommunity
transpeers@gmail.com

CONTACT Hamilton

Single access point for children and youth requiring service for social-emotional, behavioural, developmental and/or mental health needs.
contacthamilton.ca
905-570-8888

Canadian Mental Health Association Hamilton (CMHA)

Local mental health organization providing community-based services.
cmhahamilton.ca
905-521-0090

For more culturally responsive supports please visit our [Comprehensive Community Resource List](#) located on our [Staff Wellness page](#).

National Support Lines

Trans Lifeline	1-877-330-6366
Kids Help Phone	1-800-668-6868
Talk Suicide Canada	1-833-456-4566
Black Youth Helpline	1-833-294-8650
Mental Health Helpline	1-866-531-2600
Naseeha Mental Health Hotline	1-866-627-3342
Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line	1-800-721-0066

HWDSB



Resources and Supports for Parents and Caregivers

Read through the document to find resources and supports or click links in the left column to jump to a section.

<u>Individual Supports</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Work Services provides individual mental health and well-being supports for children and youth in areas such as mental health, personal and family stressors, crisis, and more. 	
<u>Workshops & Groups</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child/Youth Treatment Groups offered by Social Work Services and Psychological Services • Social and Support Groups for Transgender, Non-binary, Gender Non-conforming and Gendering Questioning Children and Youth • Parents/Caregiver workshops and groups offered by Social Work Services, Psychological Services, and in Partnership with Hamilton Family Health Team and Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board 	
<u>Resources by Topic</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources from HWDSB for parents and caregivers on a variety of topics including anxiety, depression, developmental disabilities and mental health, emotion coaching and more. 	
<u>Provincial Resources</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources from School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO-SMSO) to help parents and caregivers with recognizing when to be concerned with your child's mental health and well-being, everyday mental health activities at home and more. 	
<u>Crisis Services</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community resources and services for those seeking immediate help and support. 	
<u>Community Supports</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services for Children and Youth • Newcomer, Immigrants and Refugees • Indian Residential School Survivors and Family Indigenous People • Two Spirit, LGBTQIA+ Communities • Services Available on the Web 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance Use • Indigenous People • Black Communities • People with Disabilities • Muslim Communities



HWDSB School-Based Individual Supports

HWDSB web page - [We Help: Mental Health and Well-being](#)

Social Work Services provides individual mental health and well-being supports for children and youth in the following areas:

- Mental health, such as anxiety or low mood,
- School avoidance and non-attendance, personal or social stressors (i.e., adverse childhood experiences, peer relationship, stress substance use),
- Family stressors that impact the student's functioning at school,
- Experiencing systemic oppression and discrimination (racism, poverty, colonialization, homophobia/biphobia/transphobia, poverty etc.),
- Crisis, such as imminent risk of harm to self or others.

Individual support can include consultation, assessment, intervention and support in accessing community services; and may include a child or youth's circle of care, such as caregivers, teachers, and community service providers and identified caring adults. All services are provided by professional social workers registered with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers and are available in all schools. Services may be provided in person and/or virtually, via MS Teams.

- *To access Social Work Services please contact the Principal/Vice-Principal of your child's school or (905) 527-5092 ext. 2806.*

HWDSB Workshops and Groups

Social and Support Groups for Transgender, Non-binary, Gender Non-conforming and Gendering Questioning Children and Youth

- ***Transcend Youth Group:*** Transcend is a social and support group for transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming and gender questioning children and youth from HWDSB schools. Group meetings are held once per month for two hours and are facilitated by peer leaders with lived experience. Transcend meetings are a welcoming environment which allows youth to develop social connections with others who share some aspect of their identity, so that they can help and support and learn from each other and from the facilitators.
 - Please contact dbyers@hwdsb.on.ca for more information.



Child/Youth Treatment Groups offered by Social Work Services and Psychological Services

- **AFFIRM:** Is an eight-session Cognitive-Based Therapy informed treatment group specifically for Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ youth to develop coping skills for anxiety and stress related to experiences of discrimination related to their sexual and gender identities. The goals of AFFIRM are to decrease unhelpful thoughts, feel better about yourself and lives and to make healthy choices for sexual and mental health.
 - Register online projectyouthaffirm.org or contact dbyers@hwdsb.on.ca if you have any questions.
- **TRAILS Anxiety and Depression:** TRAILS (Transforming Research into Action to Improve the Lives of Students) groups are designed to help our children and youth (grades 6 to 12) who struggle with moderate symptoms of stress, anxiety, and/or depression by teaching evidence-based cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and mindfulness skills. TRAILS A+D aims to help children and youth develop effective coping skills and strategies to help manage their emotions and choose helpful behaviours. This is a 10-week program that may be offered virtually and/or in person, as public health guidelines allow. Children and youth who might benefit from the group are primarily having difficulty with both anxiety and depressive symptoms/low mood that is impairing their functioning. Children and youth interested in participating should have some awareness of their struggles and would be motivated to improve their coping skills. Parent sessions are also available as part of the program, so that parents have a better understanding of their child's mood and anxiety difficulties and effective strategies to continue to improve overall wellbeing. This is a closed group, and we are currently accepting applications.
 - To access Social Work Services, please contact the Principal/Vice-Principal of your child's school or (905) 527-5092 ext. 2806.
- **Teen Activation Group (TAG):** TAG is a treatment group for youth (grades 9 to 12) struggling with depression and anxiety who are not ready to access other treatment options. The group is based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) and Behaviour Activation Therapy. The goal of the group is to help child and youth to reduce their depressive and anxious symptoms and increase their overall activity level, so they can access other treatment options or so they no longer require treatment. The group engages in education sessions, as well as social and physical activities. This is an open group and referrals are accepting on an ongoing basis.
 - To access Social Work Services, please contact the Principal/Vice-Principal of your child's school or (905) 527-5092 ext. 2806.

Social and Support Groups for Parents/Guardians/Caregivers of Transgender, Non-binary, Gender Non-conforming and Gendering Questioning Children and Youth

- **Transcend Parent Group:** Transcend is a social and support group for parents/guardians/caregivers of transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming and gender

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questioning children and youth. Group meetings are held once/month for two hours to provide an opportunity to share the ups, downs and questions about your child's gender identity, gender fluidity and transition with a welcoming group of parents/caregivers, with support from a facilitator with lived experience who works in the Hamilton trans community.

- Please contact dbyers@hwdsb.on.ca for more information.

Parent/Caregiver Workshops and Groups offered by Social Work Services, Psychological Services, and in Partnership with Hamilton Family Health Team and Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board

- **Families Worrying Less Together:** If you are a parent/primary caregiver of a student in grades Junior Kindergarten to Grade 2, or grades 3 to 6, who is excessively shy, or has intense worries and fears, come learn about the “Families Worrying Less Together” program. This program will give you practical strategies to help your child learn to cope differently. Please note: The program is for parents and primary caregivers; children do not attend.
 - For more information or to register please email wehelp@hwdsb.on.ca
- **Emotion Coaching 90-Minute Webinar:** The pandemic has increased stress for children and youth, and this has challenged the caregivers who support them. In response, we invite caregivers to explore Emotion Coaching in a series of 90-minute webinars and/or a six-week parent/caregiver group. Emotion Coaching is a communication strategy that can calm the brain in as little as 60 seconds and help improve relationships.
 - For more information or to register please email wehelp@hwdsb.on.ca
- **Emotion Focused Strategies for Supporting your Child or Youth:** Online, once a week, for 6 weeks. Caregivers will learn to respond to their child's distress and support emotion regulation. Caregivers with a child of any age and developmental stage will learn about skills to help with emotional challenges, support healthy behaviours and repair relationships. We run this group in partnership with the Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board and the Hamilton Family Health Team.
 - This group is open to patients of the Hamilton Family Health Team and parents/caregivers of a child in the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board or the Hamilton Wentworth Catholic School Board.
 - You can refer yourself to this group. For more information, or to sign up, call the Hamilton Family Health Team Groups Line at 905-667-4852.

HWDSB Infolets and Resources for Parents and Caregivers

- [Anxiety in Children](#)

curiosity • creativity • possibility

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- [Anxiety in Kindergarten](#)
- [Anxiety in Youth](#)
- [ADHD](#)
- [Depression...When it's more than sadness](#)
- [Lost, Late and Scattered: Helping a Child with Executive Functioning Difficulties](#)
- [Learning Disabilities and Mental Health](#)
- [Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health](#)
- [Emotion Coaching Cheat Sheet for Parents and Caregivers](#)
- [Emotion Coaching at HWDSB Video](#)

School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO-SMSO) Resources for Parents and Caregivers

- [SMH-ON • With Care • Tip sheet for Parents and Caregivers \(smho-smso.ca\)](#)
- [Everyday Mental Health Activities for Home](#)
- [Info Sheet for Parents and Families: Noticing Mental Health Concerns for Your Child](#)
- [Prepare; Prevent; Respond: Quick Reference for Youth Suicide Prevention](#)

Crisis Services

- [COAST Hamilton](#): Crisis Line: (905) 972-8338.
Mental health crisis outreach and support for all ages.
- McMaster Children's Hospital: Child and Youth Mental Health Emergency Services (CHYMES)
1200 Main St W, Hamilton, ON L8N 3Z5 - McMaster Children's Hospital Emergency Department
for youth age 17 and younger.
- [Kids Help Phone](#): Crisis Line: 1-800-668-6868.
24/7 counselling and information service for young people.
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24-hour mental health crisis line.

Supports in Hamilton Community

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HWDSB

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Substance Use

- [Alternatives for Youth](#): 905-527-4469.
Substance use and addiction treatment services for youth and their families by phone.
- [Alcohol, Drugs, and Gambling Services Hamilton](#): 905-546-3606.
For information, counselling and programs on alcohol, drugs and gambling. Alcohol and drug programs are for people age 23 + and gambling program for those age 12+. Family and friends can also call for information and support.

Newcomer, Immigrants and Refugees

- [Refuge: Hamilton Centre for Newcomer Health](#)

Indigenous People

- [Mental Health Support for Indigenous Students](#)
- [De dwa da dehs ny \(Aboriginal Health Centre\)](#): 905 544 4320. Improving the health and well-being of Indigenous individuals, families and communities through holistic Indigenous, Traditional and Western health care.
- [Hamilton Regional Indian Centre](#): 905 548-9593. To provide the Urban Aboriginal People with the tools to achieve a balanced holistic lifestyle
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24/7 support and resources for Indigenous women in 14 languages by calling or texting.
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Indian Residential School Survivors and Family

- 1-800-721-0066. The Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line is available 24-hours a day for anyone experiencing pain or distress because of their Residential school experience.

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Serves all youth and specifically responds to the need for a Black youth specific service, positioned and resourced to promote access to professional, culturally appropriate support for youth, families and schools.
- [Caribbean African Canadian Social Services](#): Social services for Black residents, including mental health counselling.
- [Black Youth Project](#): Reminders and affirmations to help Black community members through the pandemic.
- [8 Mental Health Practices for People of African Descent while Isolated](#)

Two Spirit, LGBTQiA+ Communities

- [Spectrum](#)
- [LGBT Youth Line](#): peer support to LGBT youth, age 29 and under. Text and online chat.
- [Trans Lifeline Hotline](#): 1-877-330-6366.
Peer support phone service run by trans people for our trans and questioning peers.
- [Tips for Supporting Yourself as a 2SLGBTQI+ Student](#)

People with Disabilities

- [CNIB](#): free virtual programs for those who are blind or partially sighted, their families, friends and caregivers.
- [Canadian Association of Community Living](#): COVID-19 mental health resources for those with disabilities.
- [Health Care Access, Research, and Developmental Disabilities \(HCARDD\)](#): virtual mental health supports for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Muslim Communities

- [Naseeha Mental Health Hotline](#): 1 (866) 627-3342. Mental Health workshops, web therapy sessions, and texting mental health support 5 days a week for Muslim and non-Muslims.

Services Available on the Web

- Internet-Based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (iCBT) available through [MindBeacon](#) or [Morneau Shepell](#): free online cognitive behavioural therapy to develop skills and strategies to address symptoms of mild to moderate anxiety and/or depression. Online support by a therapist.
- [BounceBack](#): 1-866-345-0224. Free program that provides guided mental health self-help supports for those above age 15 using workbooks, online videos and phone coaching.
- [Big White Wall](#): an anonymous online community where members can support each other 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- [Wellness Together Canada portal](#): free online resources, tools, apps and connections to trained volunteers and qualified mental health professionals

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- [Anxiety Canada](#)
Leader in developing free online, self-help, and evidence-based resources on anxiety.
- [Your Space Hamilton](#): Place for youth and families looking for mental health information and supports in Hamilton, Ontario.

curiosity • creativity • possibility

HWDSB

We Help.

Resources and Supports for Children and Youth

Read through the document to find resources and supports or click links in the left column to jump to a section.

<u>Individual Supports</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Work Services provides individual mental health and well-being supports for children and youth in areas such as mental health, personal and family stressors, crisis, and more. 	
<u>Group Supports</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child/Youth Treatment Groups offered by Social Work Services and Psychological Services • Social and Support Groups for Transgender, Non-binary, Gender Non-conforming and Gendering Questioning Children and Youth 	
<u>Provincial Resources</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources from School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO-SMSO) to help with self-care, mental health literacy, anxiety, and more. 	
<u>Crisis Services</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community resources and services for those seeking immediate help and support. 	
<u>Community Supports</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services for Children and Youth • Newcomer, Immigrants and Refugees • Indian Residential School Survivors and Family Indigenous People • Two Spirit, LGBTQIA+ Communities • Services Available on the Web 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance Use • Indigenous People • Black Communities • People with Disabilities • Muslim Communities



HWDSB School-Based Supports

HWDSB web page - [We Help: Mental Health and Well-being](#)

Social Work Services provides individual mental health and well-being supports for children and youth in the following areas:

- Mental health, such as anxiety or low mood,
- School avoidance and non-attendance, personal or social stressors (i.e., adverse childhood experiences, peer relationship, stress substance use),
- Family stressors that impact the student's functioning at school,
- Experiencing systemic oppression and discrimination (racism, poverty, colonialization, homophobia/biphobia/transphobia, poverty etc.),
- Crisis, such as imminent risk of harm to self or others.

Individual Support can include consultation, assessment, intervention and support in accessing community services; and may include a child or youth's circle of care, such as caregivers, teachers, and community service providers and identified caring adults. All services are provided by professional social workers registered with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers and are available in all schools. Services may be provided in person and/or virtually, via MS Teams.

- *To access Social Work Services please contact the Principal/Vice-Principal of your school or (905) 527-5092 ext. 2806.*

HWDSB Groups

Social and Support Groups for Transgender, Non-binary, Gender Non-conforming and Gendering Questioning Children and Youth

- ***Transcend Youth Group:*** Transcend is a social and support group for transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming and gender questioning children and youth from HWDSB schools. Group meetings are held once per month for two hours and are facilitated by peer leaders with lived experience. Transcend meetings are a welcoming environment which allows youth to develop social connections with others who share some aspect of their identity, so that they can help and support and learn from each other and from the facilitators.
 - Please contact dbyers@hwdsb.on.ca for more information.



Child/Youth Treatment Groups offered by Social Work Services and Psychological Services

- **AFFIRM:** Is an eight-session Cognitive-Based Therapy informed treatment group specifically for Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ youth to develop coping skills for anxiety and stress related to experiences of discrimination related to their sexual and gender identities. The goals of AFFIRM are to decrease unhelpful thoughts, feel better about yourself and lives, and to make healthy choices for sexual and mental health.
 - Register online projectyouthaffirm.org or contact dbyers@hwdsb.on.ca if you have any questions.
- **TRAILS Anxiety and Depression:** TRAILS (Transforming Research into Action to Improve the Lives of Students) groups are designed to help our children and youth (grades 6 to 12) who struggle with moderate symptoms of stress, anxiety, and/or depression by teaching evidence-based cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and mindfulness skills. TRAILS A+D aims to help children and youth develop effective coping skills and strategies to help manage their emotions and choose helpful behaviours. This is a 10-week program that may be offered virtually and/or in person, as public health guidelines allow. Children and youth who might benefit from the group are primarily having difficulty with both anxiety and depressive symptoms/low mood that is impairing their functioning. Children and youth interested in participating should have some awareness of their struggles and would be motivated to improve their coping skills. Parent sessions are also available as part of the program, so that parents have a better understanding of their child's mood and anxiety difficulties and effective strategies to continue to improve overall wellbeing. This is a closed group, and we are currently accepting applications.
 - To access Social Work Services, please contact the Principal/Vice-Principal of your school or (905) 527-5092 ext. 2806.
- **Teen Activation Group (TAG):** TAG is a treatment group for youth (grades 9 to 12) struggling with depression and anxiety who are not ready to access other treatment options. The group is based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) and Behaviour Activation Therapy. The goal of the group is to help child and youth to reduce their depressive and anxious symptoms and increase their overall activity level, so they can access other treatment options or so they no longer require treatment. The group engages in education sessions, as well as social and physical activities. This is an open group and referrals are accepting on an ongoing basis.
 - To access Social Work Services, please contact the Principal/Vice-Principal of your school or (905) 527-5092 ext. 2806.

School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO-SMSO) Resources for Children and Youth

- [No Problem Too Big or too Small: A help seeking resource for students by students](#)

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We Help.

- [Self-Care 101 for Students](#)
- [Mental Health Literacy and Anxiety Management Social Media Bundles](#)

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Leader in developing free online, self-help, and evidence-based resources on anxiety.
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INTEGRITY **COUNTS**

How To File a Report

How To File a Report

1

Start by visiting your company's custom URL (shared by your company) <https://www.integritycounts.ca/org/companynamere> and clicking on **File a Report**. This will take you to the safe and confidential reporting system.

The screenshot shows the IntegrityCounts homepage. At the top, it says 'INTEGRITY COUNTS' and 'Confidential & Anonymous Reporting System'. There are links for 'English' and 'Login'. The main heading is 'Have something to say?' with a 'Speak Up' button. Below this are three cards: 'File a Report' (Have something to say? File your report here.), 'Review Your Report' (Check on the status of reports submitted, add new information or respond to questions from your organization.), and 'Call the Hotline' (Find a toll-free hotline number and speak with an IntegrityCounts agent.). Below these cards is a section titled 'Introduction and Terms of Use'. It contains a welcome message, a disclaimer about confidentiality, and a message from the company. At the bottom of this section is a checkbox: 'By checking this box, you agree to the terms of use for this service.' with a 'View' link. Below the checkbox are 'Back' and 'Continue' buttons. At the very bottom, it says 'WhistleBlower Security © 2021 All rights reserved.'

2

Introduction & Terms of Use

Accept the terms and conditions for using the system. Click the checkbox, then click **Continue**.

It's time to start filing your report in your company's safe and secure reporting area.

3

Location & Confidentiality

Enter a location where your incident happened, and choose the department that best represents where the incident took place.

Use the drop-down menus to choose your location and department. If there is no option in location or department that represent where your incident took place, please manually enter this information in the boxes provided.

Select your level of anonymity. You can choose to remain completely anonymous, confidential from your organization, or completely transparent. Depending upon your selection, complete the additional required fields as necessary.

Then click **Continue**.

Location & Confidentiality

Location

Location of Case

Department of Case

Select Your Level of Anonymity

☒ Strictly Anonymous

Your identity will not be known to your organization or to IntegrityCounts.

☐ Strictly Anonymous

☐ Anonymous From Your Organization

☐ Contact Information Provided

4

Detailed Report

Now you will be at the area of your report where you can describe what happened.

Begin by providing details about when the incident happened and if it has occurred previously.

5

In the next area, you can choose a Case Type, or category, that best matches your incident.

Once you choose a category, you will have the option to provide additional information to better describe what happened (*see **Supplemental Questions** section*).

6

The next section of the page is where you can describe what happened. Describe your case in your own words and use as much detail as you can.

Use the **Additional Information** section to provide any other information if you want to.

When you are satisfied with the details you provided, click **Continue** to move to the next step.

INTEGRITY COUNTS

Confidential & Anonymous Reporting System

English | Login

generic company

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

Step 5

Detailed Report

When It Happened

Ongoing Case?
☐ Yes ☒ No

Date of Occurrence?
2021-06-16 — 2021-06-16

Has the case been reported to a supervisor in the past?
☐ Yes ☒ No

Are you an employee of the organization?
☒ Yes ☐ No

Case Types

Informational Notes
Select the case type that best describes your issue. If your issue cannot be defined by one case type, select up to three.

From the list below, please select the category that you feel best matches the issue(s) in your report.

☒ Financial Reporting and Accounting
☐ Privacy
☐ Product and Customer Service
☐ Breach of Legal Obligations
☐ Suggestions for Improvement
☐ Fraud and Embezzlement
☐ Violence and/or Abuse
☐ Workplace Health and Safety

☐ Substance Abuse
☐ Conflict of Interest
☐ Vision and Values
☐ Harassment and/or Discrimination
☐ Criminal Activity
☐ Information Security
☐ COVID-19 Safety

Enter Case Type if it's not included...

Case Details

Describe the case*

List all the individuals involved in the case

Supplemental questions

Financial Reporting and Accounting

What do you estimate the monetary value to be in this case?

Describe the financial breach that has occurred.

How did you discover the accounting issue?

Additional Information

Has this case been referred to anyone outside the organization, such as Police, Media, or a Government Agency?
☐ Yes ☒ No

If you have any additional comments to provide, communicate them here:

Back

Continue

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7 Supporting Documentation

If you have any supporting documents, like photos, videos, or files, you can use this section to upload them.

You can upload up to 10 documents.

8 The persons in the dropdown below will receive and investigate the report. If you do not wish for a person from the dropdown to receive your report, select that person and indicate whether they are directly or indirectly involved in the case.

Repeat for any additional person(s).

Click *Continue* when you are finished.

9 Before you submit your report, the next step shows you a summary of the incident and all the information you have provided.

Use this section to double check to ensure you are happy with your report before you submit it.

You can edit any sections here by clicking the icon on the right side of each step.

Before submitting your report, you have the option to accept the randomly generated password provided in the field or change it to something of your own choosing.

If you are satisfied with the information provided in your report, you can click the *Submit* button.

INTEGRITYCOUNTSCONFIDENTIAL & ANONYMOUS REPORTING SYSTEMEnglish | Login

generic company

Step 1Step 2Step 3Step 4Step 5

Supporting Documentation

Attachments

Attach any relevant supporting documentation if applicable.

Drop Files or Browse

Supports single file and multi file uploads

1

Uploaded files may contain personally identifiable information. For your own privacy, please ensure confidential information is removed from your files prior to uploading.

Protect your Report

1

IMPORTANT

The persons in the dropdown below will receive and investigate the report. If you do not wish for a person from the dropdown to receive your report, select that person and indicate whether they are directly or indirectly involved in the case. Repeat for any additional person(s).

Select a person

Name	Reason	Action
John Doe	Directly Involved	<div></div>

Provide additional information on how these individuals are involved.

untrustworthy

Step 1

Organization Name

Generic Company

Method of Reporting

Web

Step 2

Location of Case

Head Office

Department of Case

Finance

Select Your Level of Anonymity

Strictly Anonymous

Step 3

Date of Occurrence

Jun 16, 2021 (Ongoing Case)

Has the case been reported to a supervisor in the past?

No

Are you an employee of the organization?

Yes

Case Types

Financial Reporting and Accounting

What do you estimate the monetary value to be in this case?

100,000

Describe the financial breach that has occurred.

Describe it here.

How did you discover the accounting issue?

I saw it happen.

Describe the case

Details of report go here.

List all the individuals involved in the case

John Doe, Jane Smith

Has this case been referred to anyone outside the organization, such as Police, Media, or a Government Agency?

No

If you have any additional comments to provide, communicate them here:

no comments

Step 4

Restricted Reviewers

John Doe - Directly Involved

Provide additional information on how these individuals are involved.

untrustworthy

Create password

New Password

0btZE8-4u&Q

Confirm Password

0btZE8-4u&Q

1

Password Requirements

✓

Minimum 12 characters

✓

Contains 1 lowercase character

✓

Contains 1 Uppercase Character

✓

Contains 1 number

✓

Contains 1 special character

✓

Passwords must match

10

You have now successfully filed your report!

On this screen you will be given your unique Username and Password.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU SAVE THIS INFORMATION NOW!

These credentials are what you will use to log into the system to check on the status of your report, and answer any questions your organization may have about your report.

Do not share this information with anyone else.

You can use the **Log in to Print Case** button if you wish to log into the system now.

We recommend you close your browser window at this point if you are on a public computer to ensure your privacy and security.

The screenshot displays the 'INTEGRITY COUNTS' reporting system interface. At the top, it says 'Confidential & Anonymous Reporting System' with links for 'English' and 'Login'. The main heading is 'Submission Successful', followed by 'Thank you for speaking up!'. A paragraph explains that users cannot return to the report after leaving the page. Below this, a light blue box contains the generated 'Username: IC9425' and 'Password: 0bt2E, 8~4u&Q'. A blue button labeled 'Login To Print Case' is positioned below the credentials. To the right, an orange 'Information' box advises users to write down their credentials and not share them. The footer of the page reads 'WhistleBlower Security © 2021 All rights reserved.'

**Got questions?
We're here to help.**

Phone:
888-921-6875

Email:
info@whistleblowersecurity.com