



Policy Manual – Students

S.M.15 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention

The mission of Catholic Education in Hamilton-Wentworth, in union with our Bishop, is to enable all learners to realize the fullness of humanity of which Our Lord Jesus Christ is the model.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board (HWCDSD) holds sacred the view that each child is created in the image of God, and that every person must be treated with respect, dignity, and kindness. **Children, as described in *Renewing the Promise*, “are God’s gift to the world”, and that “Jesus knows you perfectly, and loves you without limits”. The HWCDSD is committed to fostering environments where every child feels valued and treasured as a child of God.** Every pupil has the right to be safe and to feel respected **within their school and their school community**. The HWCDSD is committed to creating schools that have a bullying prevention and intervention **plan** in order to foster a positive learning and teaching environment that supports academic achievement for all pupils and that helps pupils realize the fullness of humanity of which our Lord Jesus Christ is the model.

To achieve this policy, the following apply:

A whole-school approach involving all educators is required. All Board staff recognize that **all forms of bullying adversely affect** a pupil’s ability to learn and participate, **and adversely affect a pupil’s sense of safety, self-worth and overall mental health and well-being**. Bullying also adversely affects the school climate, including healthy relationships. Bullying, **including cyber-bullying, is a serious issue and is not acceptable in the school environment (including online)**, on school property, at school-related activities, on school buses, or in any other circumstance where engaging in bullying will have a negative impact on the school climate **for an individual, group or the whole school**. **Each school the HWCDSD will share its school bullying prevention, intervention and follow-up plan with the school staff, students, parents/guardians, and school community for awareness and to support its implementation.**

Purpose

Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board schools are learning communities where everyone is accepted and feels as a valued and contributing member of the school community. The school community is one where all individuals experience a safe environment, and where there are prevention, intervention, and **follow-up** strategies to address bullying behaviours.

As per subsection 1(1) of the Education Act “bullying” means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a **pupil** where,

- i) 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:
 - a) causing harm, fear or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social or academic harm, harm to the individual’s reputation or harm to the individual’s property, or
 - b) creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, and,
- ii) 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 size, 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.

Further, as found in PPM 144, Bullying Prevention and Intervention, “bullying is a behavior that can be repeated or occur one time and can be carried out by an individual or group of individuals.”

Bullying may be intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect.

Harm, as used in this policy, refers to harm **as a result of bullying** that can be experienced in a number of ways, including physical, mental, **spiritual**, emotional and/or psychological. If the behaviour is physical, it may include hitting, pushing, slapping, and tripping. If it is verbal, it may include name calling, mocking, insults, threats, and sexist, racist, homophobic, or transphobic comments. If it is social or relational aggression, it is **more subtle** and may involve such behaviours as gossiping, spreading rumours, excluding others from a group, humiliating others with public gestures or graffiti, and shunning or ignoring. Social aggression may also occur through the use of technology (e.g., spreading rumours, images, or hurtful comments through the use of e-mail, cell phones, text messaging, Internet websites, social networking **and social media platforms, digital gaming, communication applications and any ~~or~~ other form of technology**).

Cyber-bullying may include, but is not limited to:

- **sending or sharing hateful, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating electronic communication or images;**
- **revealing information considered to be personal, private, and sensitive without consent;**
- **making and/or engaging, and/or participating in fake accounts on social networking sites to impersonate, humiliate and/or exclude others;**
- **excluding or disrupting access to, a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts and during digital gaming sessions.**

To support the prevention, early intervention, and follow-up of bullying in HWCDSB, each school will develop its own bullying prevention, intervention, and follow-up plan, structured from the HWCDSB Board template. The plans will be reviewed minimally once every two years, and will involve consultation with school staff, students, and the Catholic School Council for their input on bullying, including cyber-bullying, prevention and intervention. Schools will maintain reported incidents of bullying as well as the record of follow-up action taken, including parent/guardian notification.

Regular staff professional development on bullying and cyber-bullying will be provided to school board staff. Annual professional development on bullying prevention and strategies to promote a positive Catholic school climate will be provided to teachers and staff who work directly with students.

Bullying prevention and intervention awareness-raising strategies for staff, students, and parents/guardians will occur regularly and include the HWCDSB school bullying prevention, intervention, and follow-up plan; bullying reporting procedures, and the HWCDSB anonymous bullying reporting tool; and materials, resources, and programs available for students and parents/guardians.

Responses to Incidents of Bullying – Education Act

306. (1) A principal shall consider whether to suspend a pupil if he or she believes that the pupil has engaged in any of the following activities while at school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate:

6.0 Bullying.

310. (1) A principal shall suspend a pupil if he or she believes that the pupil has engaged in any of the following activities while at school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate:

7.1 Bullying, if,

- i. the pupil has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying, and**
- ii. the pupil's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person.**

7.2 Any activity listed in subsection 306 (1) 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.

Incidents of bullying involving students from Kindergarten to Grade 3 should be addressed with the appropriate positive behaviour supports in the school setting.

Principals must suspend students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 for incidents of bullying if:

- their continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person
- the bullying 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 (for example, socio- economic status, appearance)

The principal may only suspend a student in Kindergarten to Grade 3 under section 310 of the Education Act for engaging in bullying if they have conducted an investigation respecting the allegations.

In addition to the descriptors found in the Education Act, 310. (1) 7.2, where bullying is motivated by areas protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code, the HWCDSB includes also incidents of bullying motivated by culture or physical attributes and other forms of bias and discrimination.

Responsibility

School Principals, Senior Administration

Regulations

Bill 13 – Accepting Schools Act (2012) Board

O. Reg. 440/20 – Suspension of Elementary School Pupils

Education Act

- Section 170 (1) 7.2 – Programs, Interventions & Other Supports
- Section 264 – Duties of Teacher
- Section 265 – Duties of Principal
- Section 300 – Reporting to Principal
- Section 300.3 – Notifying Parents
- Sections 306 – 309 – Suspension
- Sections 310 – 314 – Suspension, Investigation and Possible Expulsion

PPM 119 – Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools

PPM 120 – Reporting Violent Incidents to the Ministry of Education

PPM 128 – Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct

PPM 141 – School Board Program for Students on Long-Term Suspension

PPM 142 – School Board Programs for Expelled Students

PPM 144 – Bullying Prevention & Intervention

PPM 145 – Progressive Discipline & Promoting Positive Student Behaviour

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Ontario Human Rights Code

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Related Policies

SM08 Safe Schools

SM09 Code of Student Conduct and Discipline

BB05 Cannabis, Tobacco and Smoke Free Schools
S15 Internet-Acceptable Use Policy for Schools
A04 Equity and Inclusion Education
Principles of Catholic Social Teachings

Related Board Committee: Committee of the Whole

Policy Review Date

BM Original Policy Approved June 1, 2004.

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To be reviewed every **five** years