



Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
Believing, Achieving, Serving

HWCDSB Bullying Prevention, Intervention and Follow-up Plan

St. Thomas More Catholic Secondary School

KEY TERMS

What is Bullying?

'Bullying' means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a child or youth where,

a) they should know that the behaviour would be likely to,

- i. cause 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
- ii. create a negative environment at a school for another individual

b) there is a real or perceived power imbalance 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.

Bullying is defined as: "typically a form of repeated, persistent, and aggressive behaviour directed at an individual or individuals that is intended to cause (or should be known to cause) fear and distress and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, or reputation. Bullying occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance".

What are the Forms of Bullying?

1) Physical Bullying can be:

- Hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting, beating up, stealing, or damaging property.

2) Verbal Bullying can be:

- Name-calling, mocking, hurtful teasing, humiliating or threatening someone, racist or sexist comments, harassment.

3) Social Bullying can be:

- Excluding others from the group, gossiping or spreading rumours, setting others up to look foolish, and damaging friendships;
- Treating people badly because of their identity, saying bad things about a culture, calling someone racist names, telling racist jokes;
- Treating people badly because of their religion or beliefs, saying bad things about a religion or belief, calling someone names, telling jokes about a religion or belief;
- Leaving someone out or treating them badly because they are a boy or a girl, making someone feel uncomfortable because of their sexual orientation/gender identity/gender expression, making sexist comments or jokes, touching, pinching or grabbing someone in a sexual way, making rude comments about someone's sexual behaviour or sexual orientation;
- Leaving someone out or treating them badly because of a disability, making someone feel uncomfortable because of a disability (e.g., mental or physical), making comments or jokes to hurt someone with a disability;
- Treating someone badly because of his/her appearance (e.g., weight-based teasing) or social class (e.g., not having name brand clothing or possessions).

4) Electronic Bullying: Electronic communication lets youth connect with each other in all kinds of ways. Youth use social media to create relationships with others. Healthy face-to-face and online relationships mean that interactions are respectful. Disrespectful interactions become bullying. Cyberbullying is:

- Electronic communication used to upset, threaten or embarrass another person;
- Using email, cell phones, text messages, and internet sites to threaten, harass, embarrass, socially exclude, or damage reputations and friendships;
- Includes put-downs, insults, spreading rumours, sharing private information, photos or videos or threatening to harm someone;
- Is always aggressive and hurtful.

How is Bullying different from Teasing and/or Aggression?

Teasing	Aggression	Bullying
Is equal and reciprocated Is fun and not hurtful Often occurs prior to aggression	Is conflict Can be intentional or unintentional Could be one time Can lead to BULLYING	A form of typically repeated, persistent, and aggressive behaviour Directed at an individual or individuals that is intended to cause fear

Key Elements of a Whole School Approach to Prevent Bullying and Promote Healthy Relationships

A whole school approach brings everyone together to work toward creating a safe, inclusive, and accepting school where bullying problems are prevented and handled effectively when they arise. A whole school approach involves the administration, teaching and school staff, children, youth, parents/guardians, and the broader community.

A whole school approach is the most effective way to prevent bullying and promote learning. Children’s learning depends on having positive relationships at school. When everyone works together for a safe, inclusive, and accepting school, children and youth receive **consistent** messages and responses about bullying. By providing consistent messages, responses, and supports that address bullying problems, school communities can promote positive, healthy relationships for their children and youth.

Bullying prevention and intervention are not just about eliminating bullying—it is also about promoting the development of healthy relationships. The goal is to help ensure that all children and youth have healthy, safe, respectful and caring relationships with everyone in their lives.

Prevention

Bullying prevention strategies provide children and youth with awareness and skills:

1. To initiate and engage in positive relationships;
2. To prevent from bullying others;
3. To cope effectively with being bullied (e.g., walk away or tell someone)

The classroom is one of the primary places where social and emotional skills can be learned and character can be developed, but learning these skills does not always come naturally. Just as with other forms of learning, children and youth learn relationship skills by trial and error and, as with reading and math, we need to provide extra supports to those who are constantly struggling to foster positive relationships.

Goals of Bullying Prevention Activities

1. Promoting positive relationships within and between the entire school to enhance school climate and a supportive learning environment;
2. Educating and developing awareness about bullying, the importance of healthy relationships, and self-awareness about the use of real and perceived power in relationships;
3. Consolidating attitudes which are incompatible with bullying for inclusion, acceptance and respect for all;
4. Developing awareness of bullying issues at the school;
5. Developing positive solutions to prevent and address bullying;
6. Learning positive strategies to address bullying by a) children and youth who are victimized, b) children and youth who witness bullying, c) teachers, and d) other school staff;
7. Building social responsibility and open trusting communication about bullying and relationship difficulties.

Intervention

Bullying intervention strategies are used when children and youth experience problems with bullying. There are two approaches to intervention:

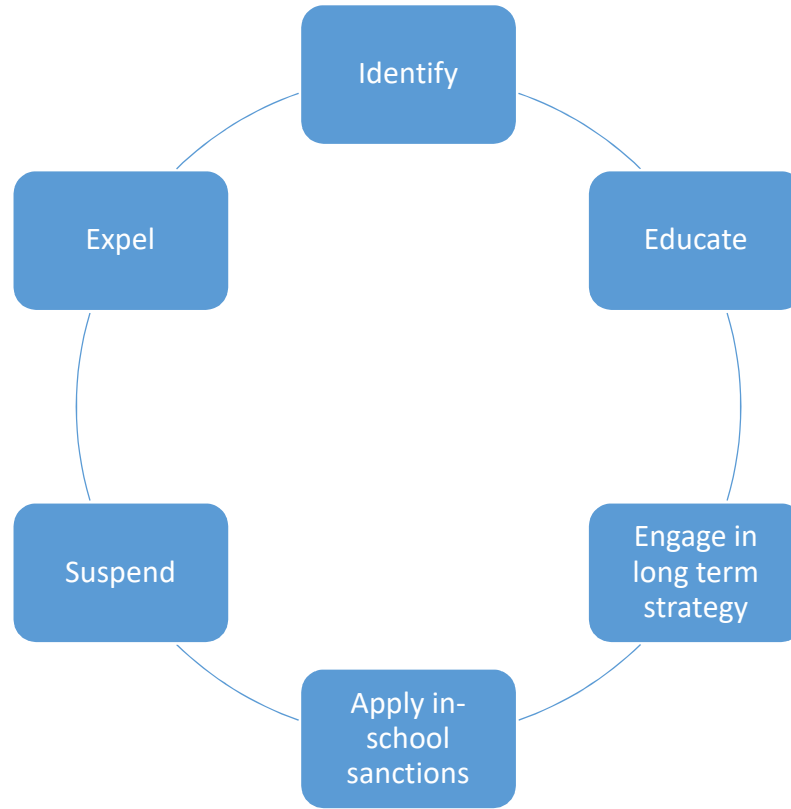
1. Providing individualized supports to promote development in areas where children and youth are struggling (e.g., understanding, social skills, attitudes) and to promote their strengths.
2. Helping to ensure that children/youths' relationships with teachers, peers, family and the community are both positive and support the development of constructive social understanding, behaviours, and attitudes.

PREVENTION	PREVENTION: ACTIVITIES THAT RAISE AWARENESS AND INCREASE POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS FOR THE WHOLE SCHOOL
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diversity Committee: Bullying Prevention Week activities, Black History Month activities, Gandhi Peace Walk - Various Social Justice and Spiritual activities through our school Chaplain (Good Shepherd visits, Rosary, Masses and Reconciliation, classroom visits from Chaplain, Retreats, morning and end of the day prayer, students involved in school masses) - Christmas Miracle: Helping many local schools as well as in the STM community - STM Cares: A variety of activities regarding mental health and well-being. - Healthy Action Team (HAT): A variety of activities that promote mental health and physical well-being. - Prefects: A group of student leaders who facilitate a variety of student led activities based on feedback from their peers. On campus activities as well as activities in the community (i.e. daily kindness challenges), community outreach outside the community (local retirement homes), grade 9 orientation activities to help promote inclusion and belonging, exam preparation presentations to all Grade 9 students - Breakfast Club available daily - School Assemblies to promote inclusion (Remembrance Day Assembly, We Scare Hunger, Culture of Life) - Best Buddies: Promotes inclusion and the Board "Each Belongs" philosophy - We Scare Hunger: Over 1,000 students participate as well as their family members, and STM staff - Peer Leadership Class: Meet individually with all Grade 9 students and prepare presentations for incoming Grade 8 Feeder school students - Grade 8 and 9 Parent Presentations - Buy in opportunities facilitated through Athletic Council to help promote school spirit and togetherness (including feeder school visits) - Student Council events throughout the year - Extensive extra-curricular programming for all students (Clubs and Athletics) - MORE Pride: Promotes inclusivity and the Board "Each Belongs" philosophy - Student Voice is encouraged - CMOR morning announcements promotes and celebrates student accomplishments - Newcomer orientation program for ELL students
School Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional Development Sessions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SafeTalk and ASIST Training for staff - Student Success Department, Special Education Resource Department, Student Services, ELL Teachers and Support Staff, Social Worker, Educational Assistants, School Nurse, Chaplain, Mental Health and Addictions Nurse, Faith Animator, OASIS Program (serving newcomer children and youth), Pathways Workers, Settlement Worker, Indigenous Education Lead and support team as resources to help support students meet success
Classroom Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A collaborative approach between teachers, parents, administration, and all school staff to promote student success and help all students achieve the Catholic Graduate Expectations (a discerning believer, and effective communicator, a reflective and creative holistic thinker, a collaborative contributor, a caring family member, a self-directed, responsible, lifelong learner, and a responsible citizen)
Parents/Guardians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly Parent Council Meetings - Parent Teacher Interviews Semester One and Semester Two - School Website: Parents can access information pertaining to St. Thomas More Catholic Secondary School - Grade 8 and Grade 9 Parent Presentations - On-going communication between parents/guardians and school
Community	<p>St. Thomas More Catholic Secondary School is dedicated to working with community parishes, and community partners to support a learning environment, positive school climate and preventing bullying.</p>
Additional Notes:	<p>There are many creative ways to work with the different levels of a school community to increase awareness and engagement in promoting positive relationships and preventing bullying.</p> <p>www.teachsafeschools.org www.peacefulschoolsinternational.org www.stopbullyingnow.gov</p>

INTERVENTION	INTERVENTION: ACTIVITIES THAT FOCUS ON INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE INVOLVED IN BULLYING PROBLEMS – AS THE CHILD OR YOUTH WHO BULLIES, THE CHILD OR YOUTH WHO IS VICTIMIZED, OR THE CHILD OR YOUTH WHO WITNESSES THE BULLYING
School Level	<p>When addressing bullying ask yourself the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the particular children or youth circumstances? • What is the nature of the bullying behaviour? • How frequent and severe is the bullying? • What is the impact of the behavior on the school climate? • Where in the school is the bullying taking place? • What interventions will promote positive behavior in this student and be both corrective and supportive? • Is the response based on current school, board and ministry policies and guidelines (e.g., considering mitigating and other factors)? <p>Below are the steps to be taken when responding to aggressive and/or bullying incidents that could happen at your school. The steps are based on the Progressive Discipline PPM 145. Progressive discipline utilizes a continuum of interventions to provide support to teach appropriate behaviours and consequences to address appropriate behaviour. The six steps to address bullying are outlined in the chart below.</p>

Responding to Aggressive and Bullying Incidents:



INTERVENE IN AGGRESSIVE AND/OR BULLYING INTERACTIONS: STEP 1	
Step 1: Identify	This level of intervention applies to all aggressive and bullying incidents.
Response is immediate and takes about 3 minutes.	<p>Stop the Aggression or Bullying</p> <p>It is important that all children and youth understand the school's commitment to ensuring their safety.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interrupt the bullying in front of anyone who witnesses it. Say, <i>"Stop it. That's bullying."</i> • Make sure all children and youth in the area hear your comments.
	<p>Identify the Behaviour as Aggression or Bullying</p> <p>A major goal is to take the "spotlight" off the child/youth being targeted and turn the focus to the behavior.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Label the form of bullying (physical, verbal, social or electronic): <i>"I noticed (saw, heard) _____."</i> • Identify the problem behaviour with reference to the school's Code of Conduct: <i>"Our school's Code of Conduct says we must treat everyone with respect."</i>
	<p>Broaden the Response</p> <p>Help children or youth who bully realize the negative impacts of their actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the aggression and bullying behavior in the context of the impact on other children and youth at the school: <i>"This can also hurt others who overhear it."</i> • Identify the behaviour, <u>not the person</u>, as negative and indicate the expectations for children or youth: <i>"At this school, we do not put people down."</i> or <i>"Our school does not appreciate hurtful behavior. We support and are respectful to other children/youth."</i>
	<p>Ask for Positive Change in Future Behavior</p> <p>Speak directly to the child or youth who is bullying and personalize the response.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"(Use the child/youth's name), please pause and think before you act."</i> Be sure to be supportive to the child or youth who was victimized. • Check in with the child or youth who was bullied: <i>"All children and youth in our school have the right to be safe and be treated respectfully. I am sorry this happened to you and I will work to help ensure that it will not happen again."</i>
Response requires short-term follow up.	<p>Follow up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record the incident and report it to the principal. • Determine if this is bullying or aggression (use the tool). If this is bullying, continue to Step 2.

INTERVENING IN AGGRESSIVE AND/OR BULLYING INTERACTIONS: STEP 2	
Step 2: Educate	This is a response to every bullying incident. Complete Step 1 first.
	Identify (See above) • Includes all steps in Step 1.
	<p>Educational Opportunities for Learning</p> <p>Children and youth who bully must learn that their behaviour is inappropriate and harmful to the other people involved. They need to acquire the understanding and skills that allow them to interact positively and respectfully with others. Educational learning opportunities will help children and youth develop the insights and empathy needed to modify their behaviour.</p> <p>Educational learning opportunities must be (a) swift, (b) consistently applied, and (c) delivered in a nonaggressive manner—<i>hostile adults inadvertently teach children to use aggression.</i></p> <p>Examples of Educational Consequences Have the child or youth who bullied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead a class discussion (e.g., harmful effects of bullying, how peers can prevent bullying) • Write a story (e.g., about the negative impact of bullying) • Write a note to their parents/guardians explaining their behaviour and the consequences of it • Develop a role play • Prepare a class presentation • Read about bullying prevention • Make posters for the school • Work on learning to see the perspective of other children/youth and empathize • Work on building leadership skills and find opportunity for positive leadership (e.g., leadership in play, clubs and team involvement)

	<p>Repair</p> <p>Given that children or youth have to interact at school, it is important to repair their relationship(s) so that it does not negatively influence the school climate and perceptions of safety. Involve the child or youth who was bullying in making amends or repairing the relationship to help him or her take responsibility for his/her behaviour and to develop an understanding of the impact of bullying. If the child or youth who was bullying cannot authentically apologize for his/her behaviour, use an indirect method (e.g., writing a letter of apology) rather than a direct apology (e.g., a restorative meeting).</p>
	<p>Follow up (To help ensure ongoing check-ins)</p> <p>Contact Parents/Guardians</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact parents/guardians of both the child or youth who engaged in bullying and the child or youth who was bullied • Provide some information about what happened, how it was addressed (progressive discipline, the learning opportunities) while respecting the privacy of all students involved. Explain the monitoring and following-up plans to avoid repeated events • Engage parents/guardians by asking for their support in monitoring the situation and ensuring that it does not happen again • Follow-up with the parents/guardians either with a phone call, email, or note home one week after the event to find out how the child/youth is doing and if further information is needed <p>Monitor the Child or Youth</p> <p>Identify a school staff member who can check in with the child or youth who bullied and the child or youth who was victimized the day following the incident. Use a 'three, two, one' strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Check-in three times in the first week following the incident, (ii) Two times in the second week following the incident and, (iii) One time in the third week following the incident. <p>Frequent check-ins with the child or youth who bullied let him/her know that adults are concerned about the behaviour and are monitoring the situation to help ensure that the bullying has stopped. It also supports the child or youth who was victimized, by reinforcing his/her understanding that he/she has a right to be safe, that the adults in the school are concerned about safety, and that they are following up to help ensure that the bullying has stopped.</p>
<p>INTERVENING IN AGGRESSIVE AND/OR BULLYING INTERACTIONS: STEP 3</p>	

Step 3: Support and Counsel	Children and youth who are repeatedly involved in bullying may require more intensive support.
Response is on the spot.	Identify <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes all steps in Step 1. • See above descriptions.
	Educate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes all steps in Step 2. • See above descriptions
	Developing a Long Term Strategy for the Student who Bullies and for the Student who is Victimized <p>When a problem with either the child who engages in bullying or the child being bullied persists over time in spite of educational intervention, more intensive support is required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the supports that are available within the school, board, and community to assist in the interventions for the child/youth involved in bullying • Meet with parents/guardians to review the problem and potential solutions which may include exploring the underlying causes of the aggressive behaviour, as well as recognizing the child/youths' strengths and challenges • Based on the child/youths' needs consider the appropriate intervention (e.g., individual counselling, mental health support, parenting/guardian support, skills training). • Assess the need for academic support • Work with the parents/guardians to connect with the appropriate supports and resources within the school, the board, or the community
	Monitoring and Follow-up <p>Follow up with parents/guardians and the child/youth to continue the support and help ensure that positive progress is being made.</p>

INTERVENING IN AGGRESSIVE AND/OR BULLYING INTERACTIONS: STEP 4	
Step 4: Apply in-school sanctions	Children and youth who are not responding to Steps 1 – 3, may need to have sanctions applied while at school.
	Identify <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes all steps in Step 1. • See above descriptions.
	Educate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes all steps in Step 2. • See above descriptions.
	Engaging in a Long Term Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes all steps in Step 3. • See above descriptions.
	Apply in-school Sanctions to child/youth Engaging in Bullying If the above steps have not been successful in stopping bullying and learning positive behaviours, it may be necessary to introduce appropriate consequences. Schools determine their own progressive discipline measures (e.g., exclusion from extracurricular school activities, think papers, community service, detention etc.) in order to keep children and youth safe. Taking into account mitigating factors, detention has been identified as an appropriate strategy within the Ministry of Education’s Progressive Discipline Policy.
INTERVENING IN AGGRESSIVE AND/OR BULLYING INTERACTIONS: STEP 5	
Step 5: Suspend	Once mitigating factors have been taken into account, students may remain on this level for repeated bullying incidents.
	Identify <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes all steps in Step 1.
	Educate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes all steps in Step 2.
	Engaging in a Long Term Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes all steps in Step 3.
	Apply in-school Sanctions to child/ youth Engaging in Bullying <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes all steps in Step 4.
	Suspend child/youth Engaging in Bullying For safety reasons, it may be necessary to exclude the child/youth from the school for a limited period of time. It is important for the child/youth to remain connected to the school and to his/her academic program, consequently, providing access to learning resources. Developing reintegration strategies sets the expectation that the child/youth will rejoin the school community and abide by the school bullying prevention plan and code of conduct. If available, children/youth can be referred to alternative programs that build skills, behaviours, and positive attitudes, as well as ongoing learning opportunities.

INTERVENING IN AGGRESSIVE AND/OR BULLYING INTERACTIONS: STEP 6	
Step 6: Expel	This is the final step.
	Identify
	Educate
	Engaging in a Long Term Strategy
	Apply in-school Sanctions to child/youth Engaging in Bullying
	Suspend child/youth Engaging in Bullying
	Expel child/youth Engaging in Bullying <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the Ministry of Education, in extreme cases, a decision may be made that a child/youth cannot return to his/her school.

FOLLOW UP	
	<p>The only way that you will know whether bullying has stopped is by following up with the victimized child/youth. Set up regular follow up meetings.</p> <p>For example, the following meeting schedule can be effective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) daily for the first week ii) every other day during the second week, and iii) once during the third week if the bullying has stopped. <p>In these follow up meetings, you can focus your discussion on questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How have things at school been for you since we last met? 2) Have you experienced any bullying? 3) Have you experienced any problems because you reported bullying? 4) Are there other students you can stay with so that you feel safe? <p>If children and youth still experience bullying during the follow up period, you need to reinforce strategies with those who are bullying to help ensure it stops.</p>

Final Consideration

To understand and effectively address bullying, a “binocular” view is needed. With only one lens, the focus is limited to the individual needs of students involved in all roles within bullying: those being aggressive, those being victimized, and those who witness bullying. This singular view, however, falls short in providing a thorough understanding of bullying problems. By adding a second lens, as with binoculars, it can expand the focus to include student’s relationships. This second perspective takes into account the social dynamics in their peer groups—and the roles that adults play in shaping their experiences. Together these two lenses offer a more comprehensive perspective on bullying problems. This deeper understanding of the complexity of the issues will lead to recognize the multiple approaches required to address bullying problems.

Reference

The content of these slides is based directly on and drawn from the PREVNet document *Bullying Prevention and Intervention in the School Environment: Factsheets and Tools*, 2014, developed by Dr. Debra Pepler and Dr. Wendy Craig (www.prevnet.ca).

For additional information and support in bullying prevention and intervention planning, please contact the HWCDSB Superintendent of Education and/or Mental Health Lead.