

How Can I Help My Child If He/She Is A Victim?

- Avoid blaming your child and the expectation that he/she should be able to deal with the problem alone.
- Assure your child that you take the problem seriously.
- Calmly help your child recall the details of what happened. Write down who was involved, where it happened, who else was present and whether there have been other similar incidents.
- Model assertive behaviour rather than aggression as a way of resolving conflicts.
- Devise a plan of action that does not threaten or frighten your child. Keep in mind that children must live with the consequences of our actions when we intercede on their behalf. Their continued trust depends on our delivery of sound advice, guidance and protection from harm.
- Meet with your child's teacher and/or principal and discuss your concerns providing written details and ask how you can further support your child.
- Follow up regularly with the teacher/principal to ensure open communication and on-going support.
- If the situation remains unresolved and the bullying continues, advise the principal that you will be submitting your concerns in writing to your Superintendent of Education.

What If My Child Demonstrates Bullying Behaviour?

If you think that your child is bullying other children, you may not be sure what to do about the situation. Many parents are hesitant to address the problem because they are under the mistaken impression that in doing so they would be viewed as not supporting their child.

Your child may be behaving in this way because he/she:

- may not realize it is wrong or know how hurtful it is to other children;
- may not have the language skills to relate appropriately to other children;
- may not have learned to empathize with others' feelings;
- may gain recognition and popularity by acting aggressively;
- may be encouraged to bully by a negative role model;
- may be imitating violent or aggressive behaviour which is witnessed regularly;
- may be trying to regain lost power.

If you suspect that your child is involved in bullying other children, contact your child's school and ask for help.

For more information please contact your School Principal or School Social Worker.

RESPONDING TO BULLYING BEHAVIOUR



Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic Schools
150 years of 'Believing, Achieving, Serving'

FAMILY INFORMATION PAMPHLET

Board Policy

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board is committed to enabling all learners to reflect social justice, respect and fairness for all. It reminds all to reflect on Jesus as our model. It recognizes that bullying behaviour has a negative effect on the school community. Students who are intimidated and victimized at school are unable to give their education the full attention and effort needed for success. Bullying behaviour can also lead to more serious violence and to long-term social and emotional problems on the part of bullies, victims and bystanders. Every student has the right to be safe in and around school. Bullying behaviour, in any form, shall not be tolerated at any school facility or at any school-related activity on or off campus.

Definition

Bullying is 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.

- Ministry of Education, PPM 144
November, 2009

Types of Bullying

Bullying is a dynamic of unhealthy interaction that can take many forms. It can be:

- Physical - hitting, pushing tripping
- Verbal - name calling, mocking or making sexist, racist or homophobic comments
- Social - excluding others from a group; spreading gossip or rumours
- Technological - spreading rumours, images or hurtful comments through the use of e-mail, cell-phones, text messaging, internet websites, or other technology

Staff Intervention

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board expects staff members who observe or become aware of any inappropriate behaviour, including bullying, to take immediate and appropriate steps to intervene, including informing the school principal/vice principal of the incident.

Upon notification of an incident the principal will ensure that a thorough investigation ensues taking into account any mitigating factors, interviews with the affected parties, witnesses and where warranted the parents of those involved. Serious incidents may also require police involvement.

Consequences

Once an investigation has concluded the principal will determine a course of action consistent with the Progressive Discipline policy of the Board including, where necessary, any steps to be taken to protect the ongoing safety of the student(s).

Sharing Information

When a student has been harmed as the result of an incident for which suspension or expulsion may be administered, sharing of information with parents will be consistent with section 300.3(4) of the Education Act which states: "When notifying the parent/guardian of a victim the principal will disclose the following:

- the nature of the incident that resulted in harm to the student;
- the nature of the harm to the student; and the steps taken to protect the student's safety, including the nature of any discipline in response to the incident but excluding any personal information such as names or referrals for counselling.

Prevention

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board has established a Bullying Prevention Task Force to develop strategies for dealing with the problem of bullying in our schools. In addition, each school has a Safe Schools Committee which is, in part, responsible for determining how serious the problem of bullying is in its school, for putting in place strategies to prevent bullying behaviour and to intervene effectively when bullying does occur.