Halton District School Board   *Administrative Procedure*

Topic:	**Bullying Prevention and Intervention**
Effective:	**February 2013**
Cross-Reference:	**Ontario Human Rights Code Bill 13: Accepting Schools Act;**
	Education Act, Part XIII Behaviour;
	Discipline and Safety Policy and Program Memoranda:
	PPM 119 (Equity and Inclusive Education);
	PPM 120 (Reporting Violent Incidents);
	PPM 128 (Provincial/Board/School Code of Conduct);
	PPM 141 (Programs for Students on Long-term Suspension);
	PPM 142 (Expulsion Programs);
	PPM 144 (Bullying Prevention and Intervention);
	PPM 145 (Progressive Discipline);
	Ontario Regulation 472/07 (Mitigating Circumstances);
	Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations;
	HDSB Policy: Safe and Inclusive Schools;
	HDSB Administrative Procedures:
	Positive School Climate-Progressive Discipline
	Suspension and Expulsions
	Violence Threat Risk Assessment
	Discrimination & Harassment
	Managing Violent and Aggressive Behaviour of Students
	with Special Needs
	Exclusion
	Halton Region Police/School Board Protocol
Review Date:	**November 2017, January 2018**
Revision Date:	**January 2020**
Responsibility:	**Superintendent of Education (Safe and Accepting Schools)**

INTENDED PURPOSE:

The Halton District School Board is committed to the establishment and maintenance of safe, caring, equitable, and inclusive school environments in order to maximize the learning potential of all students and to ensure a positive school climate for all members of the school community.

The Board recognizes bullying behaviour:
   (a) adversely affects students' ability to learn, and the dignity and self-esteem of students who are bullied;
   (b) adversely impacts students who engage in bullying behaviour and those who witness bullying;
   (c) adversely affects healthy relationships and the school climate for students, staff, and community members;
   (d) adversely affects a school's ability to educate its students, and
   (e) will not be accepted on school property, at school-related activities, on school buses, or in any other circumstances (e.g., online) where engaging in bullying will have a negative impact on the school climate.

This procedure has been developed to implement provincial legislation and the Safe and Inclusive Schools Policy of Halton District School Board. It serves to ensure that building healthy relationships within the context of a whole-school approach to bullying prevention and intervention are supported. This procedure supports a continuum of bullying prevention and intervention strategies.

The *Ontario Human Rights* Code has primacy over provincial legislation and policies, as well as school board policies and procedures, such that the *Education Act*, regulations, Ministry of Education Program Policy Memoranda, and Board policies and procedures are subject to, and shall be interpreted and applied in accordance with the *Human Rights Code of Ontario*.

PROCEDURE

Providing students with an opportunity to learn and develop in a safe, equitable and respectful society is a shared responsibility in which the Board and our schools play an important role. Schools with bullying prevention and intervention strategies foster a positive learning and teaching environment that supports academic achievement for all students and that helps students reach their full potential. All members of the school community must model bullying prevention and intervention strategies.

Children who suffer prolonged victimization through bullying, as well as children who use power and aggression through bullying others, may experience a range of psycho-social problems that may extend into adolescence and adulthood. Both children who are bullied and children who bully are at risk for poor school functioning, in terms of poor attitudes towards school, low grades, and absenteeism (*Rigby, 2003; Tremblay, 1999*). Children who witness bullying are also faced with social emotional costs including erosion of self-confidence and self-respect (*Coloroso, 2002*). In addition, there is new evidence to suggest that physiological changes may occur in the brain development of students who are bullied (*Vaillancourt et al, 2011*).

1) **Definitions**
   Bullying is defined as aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a student where,
   a) 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 that effect of:

   i) causing harm, fear or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social or academic harm, harm to the person's reputation or property, or

   ii) creating a negative environment at the school for another individual**, and**

   b) the behaviour occurs in a context where 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 can be physical (e.g., hitting, pushing, tripping), verbal (e.g., name calling, mocking, or making sexist, racist, or homophobic comments), or social (e.g., excluding others from a group, spreading gossip, or rumours).

   Cyberbullying is the use of information and communication technologies to bully, as defined above. Cyberbullying includes but is not limited to:

   a) creating an on-line or social media presence in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;

   b) impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted online or sent digitally;

   c) communicating material electronically to more than one person or posting material that may be accessed by one or more individuals, or

   d) inappropriate digital communication (e.g., posted on-line or social media).

   Bullying prevention is a whole school approach that builds capacity for a safe, caring, equitable and inclusive school climate. It includes a shared understanding about the nature and underlying causes of bullying and its effects on the lives of individual students and the school community.

   Bullying intervention is a comprehensive and effective response to the bullying incident that takes into consideration all parties involved in the bullying incident. It should provide specific

supports for the student who has been bullied, intervention for the student who was bullying, and strategies for responding to students who were directly observing the bullying incident.

Positive school climate is the sum total of all the personal relationships within the school and is a critical component of bullying prevention. Building and maintaining a positive school climate requires a whole school approach involving all members of the school community. The principles of equity and inclusive education must be embedded in all aspects of the learning environment to support the well-being and achievement of all students.

Well-Being Teams: Each school must have in place a Well-Being Team (formerly Safe School Action Team) that is responsible for school safety and is composed of, but not limited to, at least one student, one parent, one teacher, one member of the school's support staff, one community partner and the principal and/or vice-principal. The chair of this team must be a staff member. Well-Being teams should strive to be representative of the diversity of the student population.

2) **Board Level Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan**
The Halton District School Board shall establish a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan based on the model developed by the Ministry. During development and review of the plan, the Board will solicit the views of the pupils, teachers/Board staff, parents and guardians, SEAC, school councils and the public. The plan will serve as a model for the development of school based Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plans and will be made available to the public through the Board website and through school websites. The plan will include training and suggestions for embedding principles of equity and inclusion in the school curriculum.

3) **School Level Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plans**
All schools in Halton District School Board will revise their existing school-wide Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plans annually as part of the work of the Well-Being Team (see Appendix A). Plans must reflect the uniqueness of each school and align with the Board's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. Components of these plans must include the following:
a) definition of bullying;
b) prevention and awareness-raising strategies;
c) intervention and support strategies, including plans to protect students who have been bullied;
d) reporting requirements;
e) training strategies for members of the school community;
f) communication and outreach strategies;
g) monitoring and review processes.

The school plans must be consistent with this procedure and be communicated to students, staff, parents/guardians, the community, and posted on the school website.

4) **Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week**
The Halton District School Board supports the promotion of Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week in all schools. During the third week in November, each school is encouraged to promote awareness and understanding of bullying and its consequences in the school community.

5) **School Climate Surveys**
The Halton District School Board will conduct surveys to elicit input from students, staff and parent/guardians with respect to positive school climate and bullying prevention and intervention. **Schools may choose to conduct their own internal surveys or focus groups throughout the year in addition to the Tell Them From Me Survey conducted by the Board every other year.** Schools may provide accommodations for students with special needs where appropriate. Participation in all surveys is voluntary and anonymous, parents may choose not to have their child participate. Results of surveys are to be shared with the Well-Being Team and used to build strategies into the School Improvement Plan and Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan regarding issues identified in the climate surveys.

6) Prevention and Awareness-Raising Strategies

a) *Supporting Appropriate Student Behaviour*: Schools will implement evidence informed bullying prevention and citizenship development programs, as well as provide positive activities designed to promote the building of healthy relationships and appropriate behaviour. Schools will focus on prevention and early intervention as a key to maintaining a positive school environment in which students can learn. Schools will develop prevention measures and initiatives that include the whole school and all aspects of school life.

b) *Teaching Strategies*: Teaching strategies will support the integration of bullying prevention and intervention strategies into the curriculum. Teaching strategies will focus on developing healthy relationships by including bullying prevention throughout the curriculum in daily classroom teaching. Teachers must promote inclusion, respect and empathy, all of which are important components of bullying prevention. Bullying prevention messages are reinforced through programs addressing discrimination based on such factors as age, race, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and expression, creed, disability, place of origin, ethnicity, and family circumstances and other immutable characteristics. Through their own actions, all staff must model inclusion, respect, and empathy for all students.

c) *Opportunities for Bullying Awareness and Prevention Training*: Through each school's Well-Being Team initiatives, students may have opportunities to participate in bullying awareness and prevention training and leadership initiatives within their own schools. Staff will be provided with bullying awareness, prevention and intervention training opportunities to build capacity in order to support students and contribute to a positive learning and teaching environment.

d) *Intervention Strategies and Responding Strategies*: Board employees who work directly with students – including administrators, teachers, and support staff (e.g., staff in social work, child and youth work, psychology, and related areas, and educational assistants) must respond to any student behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate. Such inappropriate behaviour may involve bullying.

All employees of the Board must respond to all allegations of bullying behaviour and act in a timely, sensitive, and supportive manner when responding to students who disclose or report bullying incidents.

e) *Rough Play vs. Conflict vs. Bullying:* Interactions between students are often difficult to classify. The following chart provides an assessment tool to help schools with positive interventions and supports. Even where conduct is not necessarily bullying, staff should consider what appropriate responses may be used to support students and to encourage positive student behaviour. Staff are reminded that, in resolving issues in a healthy manner, students often need adult assistance to resolve rough play or conflict situations. Rough play or conflicts resolved in a timely and healthy manner is much less likely to result in bullying.

Rough Play	Conflict	Bullying
Usually friends or friendly towards each other. Often repeated. Same players.	Acquaintances or friends. Can be occasional or ongoing. Usually issue-centred, until resolved; could centre around misunderstanding, misinformation or no common ground.	Typically not friends; however may have had a relationship previously. Intentional target. Repeated and persistent.

Rough Play	Conflict	Bullying
Balance of power	Power relatively equal	Unequal power
Equal, consensual reaction.	Equal or near equal emotional reaction.	Bully's reaction meets own intrinsic need for power and control (consciously or unconsciously). Strong emotional, mental and physical reaction for target.
Not seeking power or attention	Not seeking power or attention.	Attempt to gain power and control, possessions or popularity
No intention to harm.	No intent to harm; conflict is centred around disagreement or dispute.	Intentionally harm-doing. Threats of physical or emotional harm; intent to humiliate, exclude or victimize.
Intent is fun. If goes wrong, then remorseful.	Remorse – takes responsibility.	Bully may or may not show remorse. May or may not know what they are doing is wrong. May blame target or believe the target deserves it.
Not regarded as a problem.	Effort to solve problem. Can be resolved on their own or with aid of third party.	Requires active intervention and support by third party. Bully may deny there is a problem. Target may not be able to articulate.

7) Reporting Incidents of Bullying

Any employee of the Board, before and after school service provider, and transportation provider who becomes aware that a student at a school of the Board may have engaged in an activity for which suspension or expulsion must be considered, such as bullying, shall report the matter to the principal as soon as reasonably possible. That individual must consider the safety of others and the urgency of the situation in reporting the incident, but, in any case, must report it to the principal no later than the end of the school day or end of the transportation route. In cases where an immediate action is required, a verbal report to the principal may be made. A written report must be made when it is safe to do so.

All such reports made to the principal must be confirmed in writing, using the _Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form (Appendix B) -_ Appendix B in Positive School Climate AP

The Halton District School Board expects all employees, before and after school service providers and transportation providers, to take into consideration any mitigating or other circumstances which may explain and excuse the behaviour before deciding whether or not to report the behaviour for students with known special needs, or students who require alternative education as per direction of the principal. The duty to report and subsequent filling out of the Safe Schools Incident Report Form would not be necessary or appropriate for an incident that is the result of a student's special needs, a student with known special needs, or where mitigating circumstances reasonably excuse the student's behaviour. These incidents still require appropriate follow up by the individual with notice to the principal, and completion of Employee Incident Reports if a safety risk occurs.

The Halton District School Board Administrative Procedure: *Positive School Climate* provides further details regarding responding and reporting requirements. Schools must put in place procedures to allow students and parents/guardians to report bullying incidents safely and in a way that will minimize the possibility of reprisal (i.e. verbal reporting, confidential electronic reporting).

All schools must have the "Report Bullying" tool posted in a prominent and easily accessible location on their school websites. Principals are required to follow up on all reports of bullying made through this tool and other sources.

8) **Supports for Victims, Bystanders and Students Who Demonstrate Bullying Behaviours**
Supports for students who have been bullied and intervention and support for students who have bullied others must be provided. Schools must also provide students who have witnessed bullying with supportive and responsive strategies. Schools must supply students, as well as their parents/guardians, with information regarding bullying issues, including bullying based on gender, gender identity and expression and on sexual orientation and must outline what they can do to support these students.

Schools will develop specific plans to protect students who have been bullied and must outline a process for parents/guardians to follow if they are not satisfied with the supports that their children receive. Schools must document circumstances when supports are offered and declined by the student or parent/guardians.

Intervention for students who demonstrate bullying behaviours will be consistent with a progressive discipline approach that utilizes a continuum of supports and consequences to address inappropriate student behaviour and builds upon strategies that promote positive behaviour. Intervention strategies range from early interventions to more intensive interventions in cases of persistent bullying, with possible referral to community or social service agencies.

Ongoing intervention may be necessary to sustain and promote positive student behaviour.

For a student with special education needs, interventions, supports, and consequences must be consistent with the student's strengths, needs, goals, and expectations contained in their Individual Education Plan (IEP). Mitigating and other factors must be taken into consideration when determining discipline.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
1.0   **Principal:** In addressing bullying prevention and intervention, the principal will:
- ensure a Well-Being Team is established and sustained;
- investigate all reported incidents of bullying;
- report the results of investigations to the teacher or other employee;
- notify the parent/guardians of students who have been harmed by bullying or who have caused harm as a result of bullying (See Administrative Procedure: *Positive School Climate*);
- provide support for students who have been harmed by bullying or who have caused harm as a result of bullying; and
- consult with parents/guardians about the supports and/or discipline applicable to their child

2.0   **Teachers and Other School Staff Members:** As role models, teachers and school staff uphold these high standards when they:
- help students work to their full potential and develop their sense of self-worth;
- empower students to be positive leaders in their classroom, school, and community;
- communicate regularly and meaningfully with parents/guardians;
- maintain consistent standards of behaviour for all students;
- demonstrate respect for all students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, and members of the school community;
- prepare students for the full responsibilities of citizenship; and
- respond to and report incidents of bullying.

3.0 **Students:** Students play a very important role in bullying prevention and intervention and have the responsibility to:
- contribute positively to the climate of the school;
- respect the safety, property and rights of all members of the school community;
- respect the individual needs of others;
- give respect and cooperation to all persons in positions of responsibility in the school;
- comply with school expectations and regulations with respect to behaviour and take responsibility for their own actions;
- not bring anything to school that may compromise the safety of others;
- use language that is appropriate in a learning environment; and
- respect the property of the school building, grounds, equipment and materials.

4.0 **Parents/Guardians:** Parents/guardians play an important role in the education of their children and have a responsibility to support the efforts of school staff in maintaining a safe, caring, equitable and inclusive learning environment for all students. Parents/guardians fulfil their role when they:
- demonstrate an active interest in their child's school work and progress;
- communicate regularly with the school;
- support the Board's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Administrative Procedure and school rules;
- encourage and assist their child in following the rules of behaviour; and
- assist school staff in dealing with disciplinary issues involving their child.

Appendix A

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Providing students with an opportunity to learn and develop in a safe and respectful society is a shared responsibility in which the Board and our schools play an important role. Schools with bullying prevention and intervention strategies foster a positive learning and teaching environment that supports academic achievement for all students and that helps students reach their full potential. Bullying prevention and intervention strategies must be modelled by all members of the school community.

From the Halton District School Board *Bullying Prevention and Intervention* Administrative Procedure:

Definition of Bullying:

Bullying means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a student where,
 a) the behaviour is intended, or the student ought to know the behaviour would be likely to have that effect of,
   i) causing fear or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social or academic harm, harm to the person's reputation or property, or
   ii) creating a negative environment at the school for another individual, and
 b) 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.

Bullying behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means. For the purposes of the definition of bullying, bullying by electronic means (commonly known as cyber-bullying), including digital communications or social media postings in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet; communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material that may be accessed by one or more individuals.

From Accepting Schools Act 2012:

Well-Being Team Membership:

School	
Principal or Vice-Principal:	
Teacher:	
Non-Teaching Staff:	
Parent:	
Community Partner:	
Student(s):	
Well-Being Team Contact Person: (must be a staff member)	
Email Address for Well-Being Team Contact:	

Resources/Reference:
- Safe Schools portal on myHDSB
- HDSB Guide to Bullying Prevention and Intervention Administrative Procedure
- Promoting a Positive School Climate
- TFFM Survey
- Safe Schools Social Workers
- School based Social Workers
- Child Youth Counsellors
- Public Health Nurses

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Types of bullying that exist in our school
(as identified through school based data and information)

School Bullying Prevention Goal(s)

Bullying Prevention and Awareness Strategies/Curricular Connections/Activities
(for whole school, and those students at risk of bullying behaviours)

Bullying Intervention and Support Strategies
(for individuals who cause harm, are impacted by harm and are witness to harm)

Training Resources and Outreach Strategies
(for Members of the School Staff, Parents and Community)

Bullying Prevention and Awareness Responsibilities for:
Staff

Students

Parents

Monitoring and Review Process/Timelines
This plan has been shared with staff and parents via: *(please check all that are appropriate)*
Staff Meeting
School Council Meeting
Newsletter
School Website (required)
Other _____

Yes, our team would be willing to have our plan shared on the Safe Schools portal on myHDSB