

AGENDA: 6:00 p.m. REVISED

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Land Acknowledgment
3. Approval of the Agenda

Delegations:

- A. Andrea Purnell (on behalf of Equity Network) – virtually (5 minutes) re: Whistleblower Policy
- B. Key Straughan – in-person (10 minutes) re: Whistleblower Policy

Policy Review:

4. [Whistleblower Protection](#)
 5. [Employee Attendance Management](#)
 6. [Bullying Prevention & Intervention – post-consultation](#)
-
7. Adjournment

Subject: Whistleblower Policy

Executive Council Member Responsible: Jamie Nunn
Superintendent, Human Resources



BACKGROUND

The Whistleblower Policy returns following feedback from the policy committee at the December 2022 meeting with additional revisions.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Whistleblower Policy be recommended for approval.



Whistleblower Policy

Date Approved: XXXXX

Projected Review Date: XXXXX

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PURPOSE:

Hamilton Wentworth District School Board (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, conflicts of interest, child protection, violence, harassment, bullying, alleged illegal practices, questionable financial or operational transactions or any breach of Board policy or procedure.

HWDSB is committed to providing learning and working environments that are welcoming, respectful, accessible, and free from discrimination and harassment.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

HWDSB:

- Values an organizational environment that is open and transparent and conducts operations with integrity;
- Considers all reasonable information it may receive about wrongdoing;
- Protects the identities of whistleblowers. Exceptions will be made if the issue requires investigation by law enforcement or if disclosure is required by law;
- Acknowledges that it may be difficult for a member of the HWDSB community to come forward as a whistleblower given the hierarchy of the organization;
- Encourages disclosures of wrongdoing to be made sooner, rather than later, to reduce harm to the HWDSB community;
- Demonstrates commitment to maintaining high professional ethical standards.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

- Support HWDSB community members to report suspected wrongdoing by any member of the HWDSB Community;
- Ensure that there is no reprisal against an individual reporting a suspected wrongdoing under this policy.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Director of Education

All members of the HWDSB Community are responsible for exercising diligence in preventing and for reporting in good faith all suspected wrongdoing.



Whistleblower Policy

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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: Relationship means 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.

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

HWDSB Community: Students, staff, parents, guardians, caregivers, trustees, community advisory committee members, school council members, permit holders, vendors, service providers, contractors, volunteers, visitors, all other persons who are invited to, access 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 school board property.

HWDSB Environment: Board property, schools, school buses, virtual or digital learning and working environment, social media, school or work-related events or activities, before- and after-school programs, extracurricular activities, co-instructional activities, excursions, and may include any other locations outside HWDSB that may have an impact on the school or work climate.

Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC): Enacted in 1962, 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



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- Sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding)
- Sexual Orientation
- Record of offences (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, trade or professional associations

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 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.

ACTION REQUIRED:

- Maintain a Whistleblower Procedure that is accessible to the HWDSB community. The procedure will establish and maintain a clear process for reporting, receiving and investigating suspected wrongdoing about a member of the HWDSB community;
- Address and remedy wrongdoing, as defined by the policy, appropriately and in an independent, transparent, fair, and timely manner;
- Ensure that a person who, in good faith, reports suspected wrongdoing and anyone associated with the report, including witnesses, are protected from reprisal, including harassment,



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retaliation, or adverse employment consequences;

- Provide information to all employees to make clear that this policy does not affect or replace any duty to make a report that is required or permitted under legislation.
- Communicate annually to the HWDSB Community about the Whistleblower Policy and Procedure, including details about how to make a report.

PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Intended Outcome	Assessment
To support HWDSB community members to report suspected wrongdoing by any member of the HWDSB community;	The Director of Education or designate will provide an annual report to the Audit Committee on the implementation of this policy and general findings.
Ensure that there is no reprisal against an individual reporting a suspected wrongdoing under this policy.	The Director of Education or designate will review the process regularly to ensure no reprisals have occurred.

REFERENCES:

Government Documents

Canadian Criminal Code (R.S., 1985, c. C-46)
 Child, Youth and Family Services Act
 Education Act
 Ministry of Education Expenditure Guidelines
 Ontario Regulation 361/10: Audit Committees
 Ontario Human Rights Code
 The Criminal Code of Canada (RS., 1985, c. C-46)

Subject: Employee Attendance Support Policy

Executive Council Member Responsible: Jamie Nunn
Superintendent, Human Resources



BACKGROUND

Staff have updated language throughout the Employee Attendance Support Policy for consistency and alignment with the recently passed Human Rights policy.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Employee Attendance Support Policy be recommended for approval.



Employee Attendance Support

Date Approved: XXXX

Projected Review Date: XXXX

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PURPOSE:

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, and where employees feel safe, supported and accepted to attend work regularly and to contribute to the priorities of the Board.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

HWDSB:

- Protects the safety of all employees and students;
- Strives to maintain a healthy workplace where staff feel supported to attend work regularly;
- Promotes and encourages regular attendance at work by all employees;
- Seeks to understand individual challenges or barriers employees are experiencing with regularly attending work;
- Provides individualized support and guidance to employees experiencing challenges with regularly attending work in a flexible and reasonable manner;
- Provide reasonable and appropriate accommodation in alignment with the Ontario Human Rights Code to the point of undue hardship;
- Provides training for supervisors to foster a healthy workplace; Administers attendance support in an equitable, fair and transparent manner across all employee groups.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

HWDSB will:

- Promote a positive culture of staff well-being where staff report feeling supported and engaged in their efforts towards contributing to the Board's priorities.
- Provide individualized support to employees to regularly attend work and actively mitigate and/or eliminate obstacles to regular attendance at work.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Director of Education
 Members of Executive Council
 Principals, Managers and Supervisors

TERMINOLOGY:

Accommodation: A means of preventing and removing barriers that impede staff with disabilities from participating fully in their employment through modifications or supports that address the barriers staff are



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experiencing so they can fully participate in their employment.

Attendance Support Program: The practice of offering Board support to employees to assist in early intervention to reduce obstacles that may be impacting attendance at work.

Healthy Workplace: One in which all employees collaborate to use a continual improvement process to protect and promote the health, safety and well-being of all employees. This includes physical and psycho-social health and safety, personal health and commitment to the internal and external community.

Employee: A person employed by HWDSB who performs work or supplies services for monetary compensation.

Engagement: Engagement is present in the work environment where employees feel connected to their work and are motivated to do their job.

Equity: A condition or state in which access to opportunities and resources are distributed fairly, justly and equitably. Equity involves treating some people differently or giving them what they need so they may meet the same outcomes as others.

Supervisor: The person who has charge of a workplace or authority over an employee.

ACTION REQUIRED:

Maintain an Attendance Support Program, where HWDSB identifies obstacles that may be impacting staff ability to attend work regularly by promoting a positive culture of well-being.

PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Intended Outcome	Assessment
Promote a positive culture of staff well-being where staff report feeling supported and engaged in their efforts towards contributing to the Board's priorities.	Staff Wellness Survey Attendance Support Program data
Provide individualized support to employees to regularly attend work and actively mitigate and/or eliminate obstacles to regular attendance at work	Annual attendance report Attendance Support Program data Supports specific to individual employee circumstances are identified and communicated with the employee and implemented where appropriate.

REFERENCES:

Government Documents

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act



Employee Attendance Support

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Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Ontarians with Disabilities Act
Ontario Human Rights Code
Personal Health Information Protection Act
Workplace Safety and Insurance Act
Accessible Canada Act
Education Act
Employment Standards Act
Collective Agreements

Subject: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

Executive Council Member Responsible: Sharon Stephanian
Superintendent, Safe Schools Action Plan, and Student Well-Being



BACKGROUND

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention policy has completed consultation. Staff have reviewed the feedback provided and updated the policies (please refer to the policy consultation findings and feedback reports attached).

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy be recommended for approval.



Bullying Prevention and Intervention

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PURPOSE:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) is committed to creating safe, inclusive and caring school environments through a focus on healthy relationships and development of positive school climates. Bullying, on or off school property, will not be tolerated and is never acceptable. Students and parents/guardians/caregivers will be informed and engaged when incidences of bullying have occurred.

Every student has a right to a safe and nurturing learning environment that is free from exploitation, exclusion, harassment, discrimination, bullying and violence. Bullying adversely affects a student's well-being, ability to learn, attendance, safety, sense of self-worth and may be a violation of their human rights. It adversely affects the school climate, including healthy relationships. Bullying, including cyber-bullying, is a serious issue and is **not** acceptable in the Board and school environment (including virtual), in a Board or school-related activity, or in any other circumstances that will have an impact on the school climate (e.g., off school property).

Note: This Policy aligns with Ministry of Education PPM 144: Bullying Prevention and Intervention

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- All Board employees have a responsibility to respond to and report behaviour that may lead to or be described as bullying. It is the responsibility of all individuals within a school, as part of a school community, to contribute to a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all students and staff, and that promotes the prevention of bullying.

HWDSB is committed to:

- a relentless focus on building positive and inclusive cultures in all classrooms and schools (including virtual) so that students feel a sense of belonging and safety within the conditions to achieve their full potential;
- creating student-centred learning environments where identity, voice and lived experience are affirmed and honoured as an essential part of learning;
- listening and responding to student voice;
- fostering relationships that are positive, supportive, caring and respectful;
- proactively addressing bullying throughout the school year as part of daily practice;
- protecting students from harm, peer victimization, including bullying;
- investigating and responding to incidents of bullying using a clear and transparent process;
- working alongside students and families impacted by incidents of bullying and/or bullying-like behaviour;
- providing supports to students impacted by bullying and/or bullying-like behaviour;
- improving engagement with attention to working with those impacted by decisions;



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- building trust through our actions – listening, documenting, responding and being accountable at the school and system-level for improvement in student safety and well-being through the monitoring and review of school-based data and communicating outcomes to the community.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

HWDSB will ensure:

- student-centred learning environments where identity, voice and lived experience are affirmed and honoured, contributing to belonging, safety and the development of positive, caring and respectful relationships;
- consistent approaches to addressing and reducing the incidents of bullying in schools;
- working alongside students, families and staff impacted by incidents of bullying and/or bullying-like behaviour including considering the most appropriate supports;
- accountability and transparency when an incidence of bullying is reported.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Director of Education
Members of Executive Council

Bullying prevention, intervention and responding requires all members of the school community to have roles and responsibilities. The Director of Education and Members of Executive Council are directly responsible for the operationalizing and monitoring of this Policy.

TERMINOLOGY:

Parent throughout this document is intended to be inclusive and represent parents, guardians, caregivers, and students who are 18 years of age or older.

Bullying is defined as aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a student where:

- a) the behaviour is **intended**, by the student to have the effect of, or the student 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, harm to the individual's property, or
 - b. creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, **and**
- b) the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived **power imbalance** between the student 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.



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For the purposes of the definition, “bullying” behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

For the purposes of the definition of “bullying” it includes bullying by **electronic means** (commonly known as cyber-bullying), including,

- (a) creating a web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
- (b) impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet; and
- (c) communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.

Types of Bullying:

Physical: may include hitting, pushing, slapping, tripping, kicking, shoving, beating up, stealing, damaging another person’s property or physical intimidation.

Verbal: may include name-calling, mocking, insults, threats, teasing.

Social (or Relational)/Mental/Emotional/Psychological: demeaning rolling of the eyes, excluding others from the group, gossiping, spreading rumours or images, humiliating others, making hurtful comments verbally or electronically, and/or damaging another person’s friendships, treating someone badly based on their appearance.

Electronic/Cyber: including (see definition of Bullying) and:

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

Bullying (including cyberbullying) may include intentional aggression, exclusion, saying negative things, telling a joke that may cause harm, treating someone badly or name calling directed to a person or persons because of one or more of the protected areas under the Ontario Human Rights Code (e.g. 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). In these situations, the bullying might also be considered an act of discrimination or harassment on the basis of a protected



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human rights ground and an act motivated by bias, prejudice or hate requiring a response under section 310 of the Education Act (suspension pending expulsion process)

ACTION REQUIRED:

The Board shall establish, maintain and review a comprehensive *Bullying Prevention and Intervention Strategy and a Bullying Prevention Plan (updated every two years)* which includes:

Engaging Students/Parents, Guardians, Caregivers and Families

Student engagement is a necessary condition for learning and achievement. Through student voice and engagement, students and adults collaborate to ensure their schools become a place where everyone is safe, inclusive and caring.

Parents (see Terminology) play a critical role in the lives of their children and as partners in the education of their children. It is vital that parents are confident with the measures in place to protect students from harm. Parents of students involved in bullying must be notified of the incident and be engaged in discussion of supports.

The Board and/or schools will develop student and parent communication and outreach/engagement strategies, as part of the *Bullying Prevention and Intervention Strategy*, that:

- communicate the policy, including who to contact with questions or concerns, where information is available and how to report bullying;
- establish ongoing processes to meaningfully engage as partners in education;
- support an understanding of roles and responsibilities with respect to policies and practices related to bullying prevention, including cyber-bullying prevention;
- adjust practices as necessary to address any barriers that might prevent understanding of roles and responsibilities;
- provide access to appropriate board supports, resources and publications.

Prevention and Awareness Raising

Bullying prevention and awareness raising is a critical responsibility of the board and schools which will include:

- a school-wide approach with a focus on healthy relationships, equity, inclusion and Indigenous Cultural Safety principles;
- every school will be responsible for fostering a safe, inclusive and accepting school climate through a school team which includes students and parents/guardians/caregivers;
- safe supports available in schools including affinity groups, clubs, chillout spaces etc., which reflect the identities of students who access them;
- daily awareness-raising practices, which includes expectations for appropriate student behavior and make support that are available to students more visible and accessible;



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- Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week will begin on the third Sunday in November of each year;
- student and staff learning, engagement and leadership related to bullying, particularly its connections to identity, system of oppression and discrimination;
- engaging with community partners to support bullying prevention and awareness raising.

Programs, Interventions and Other Supports

All allegations of bullying will be taken seriously and the process of responding and providing support will be transparent. Programs, interventions and supports developed will include:

- a clear and accessible process when incidents of bullying occur including appropriate and timely responses and ways to report safely and in a way that will minimize the possibility of reprisal;
- a plan to protect students who have been harmed and a process for parents to follow up if they are not satisfied with the supports;
- programs, interventions and other supports for students who have experienced bullying behaviour, witnessed incidents of bullying, or engaged in bullying behaviour;
- students with special education needs are considered in the development of interventions, supports and consequences are consistent with the child's strengths and needs, as well as with the program goals and learning expectations documented in their Individual Education Plan (IEP);
- clearly defined roles and responsibilities for staff, students, parents and community partners.

Reporting to the Principal

While the principal is responsible for school operations and must respond to all reports of bullying, students and families are encouraged to report bullying concerns to a trusted adult within the school as soon as possible.

HWDSB will maintain a clear and transparent process that allows for the following:

- various pathways and timelines to report bullying, particularly for Indigenous, Black, Racialized, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ students and students with disabilities;
- students and parents to report incidents of bullying to a caring adult/the principal
- staff report incidents of bullying to the principal immediately when they witness it or have it reported to them;
- the principal to adjust practices as necessary to address barriers that might prevent students, parents and staff from understanding their reporting roles and responsibilities;
- the principal to respond to reports of bullying in ways that honour and support the unique identities and lived experiences of students and families;
- the principal to provide access to appropriate board resources/publications for students, parents and staff.

Suspensions and Expulsions for Bullying

HWDSB is committed to sharing with students, families and staff, a clearly defined process aligned with the



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Education Act and related Regulations (e.g., Reg. 440/20) for incidences of bullying as defined within this Policy.

Professional Development for School Staff

To support awareness and understanding by those who have regular contact with students, HWDSB will:

- establish and provide annual professional development programs to educate educators and other staff about bullying prevention and strategies for promoting a positive school climate;
- put in place curriculum-linked culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy training strategies on bullying prevention and intervention to provide administrators, educators, and other school staff the resources and support they need to disrupt and dismantle systemic barriers and to address all forms of bullying and
- make learning resources available to other adults who have significant contact with students (e.g., parents, volunteers, early learning and child care, partners).

Communication and Outreach

Communication and outreach are critical components of bullying prevention and intervention. HWDSB will:

- actively communicate policies and procedures on bullying prevention and intervention to principals, educators, and other school staff, students, parents, Special Education Advisory Committee, Indigenous Education Circle, school councils, Parent Involvement Committee, other Board Advisory Committees, Early Learning and Childcare partners and school bus operators and drivers;
- articulate roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community (such as, principals, educators, other school staff, students, parents).

Monitor and Review

Monitoring and reviewing the policy will occur on a regular basis including:

- establishing indicators to support monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of the Policy and Procedure, using an anti-racist, anti-oppressive framework;
- tracking of all incidents of bullying including regularly reviewing all bullying related suspensions and expulsions to identify and mitigate patterns related to identity, discrimination and systems of oppression;
- establishing approaches to gather student, parent/guardian/caregivers and staff voice, in addition to surveys;
- surveys administered to students, parents/guardians/caregivers and staff every two years;

PROGRESS INDICATORS:



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Intended Outcome	Assessment
Student-centred learning environments where identity, voice and lived experience are affirmed and honoured, contributing to belonging, safety and the development of positive, caring and respectful relationships	School Climate Surveys/Other youth engagement approaches
Consistent approaches to responding and reducing the incidents of bullying in schools	Recorded and monitored through data collection of School Climate Surveys/Other youth engagement approaches, parent/guardian/caregiver surveys (or other engagement methods), suspensions and expulsions, and school data collection
Working alongside students, families and staff impacted by incidents of bullying and/or bullying-like behavior	Recorded and monitored through data collection of School Climate Surveys/Other youth engagement approaches, parent/guardian/caregiver surveys (or other engagement methods), staff voice/engagement
Accountability and transparency when an incidence of bullying is reported.	Recorded and monitored through data collection of School Climate Surveys/Other youth engagement approaches, parent/guardian/caregiver surveys (or other engagement methods), staff voice/engagement

REFERENCES:

Government Documents

Part XIII of the Education Act

Accepting Schools Act (Bill 13), 2012

An Act to Amend the Education Act (Progressive Discipline and School Safety), 2007

Policy/Program Memorandum 144 (Dec. 5, 2012)

Safe Schools: Creating a Positive School Climate

Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario: Supporting Students with Special Education Needs Through Progressive Discipline K-12

Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009

Ontario First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework, 2007

English Language Learners: ESL and ELD Programs and Services, 2007

Ontario Regulation 472/07

Access to School Premises -Trespass Act

OCT Standards of Teaching Practice

Ontario Human Rights Code



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Ontario Criminal Code
Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
All applicable curriculum guidelines

BULLYING INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION POLICY CONSULTATION REPORT

BACKGROUND

The *Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy* is a foundational element within the *Safe Schools Action Plan*. It is a requirement of Ministry of Education PPM 144 that all Boards have a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy with several components identified by the Ministry of Education.

The *Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy* draft was approved for consultation by the Policy Committee on March 2nd, 2022. Consistent with the *HWDSB Policy Development Process*, the nature of the DRAFT Policy and the *Safe Schools Action Plan Commitments* (Appendix A) shared within the [Safe Schools Action Plan](#), an extended consultation process (Appendix B) has been undertaken. Hearing the voices of those most impacted by the implementation of the policy is central to the process.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy consultation included two phases.

- Phase One focused on hearing the voices of those most impacted by the policy and those who experience the highest incidence of bullying.
- Phase Two focused on broader community input.

PHASE 1 CONSULTATION (MARCH 2022 TO OCTOBER 2022)

Purpose

- Hear the voices of those most impacted by the application of the policy;
- Hear the voices of those currently and historically underserved by education;
- Invite voices into a discussion on the draft – what is helpful, harmful, missing etc.;
- Gather information to inform improvements to the draft;

In Spring 2022, the *Safe Schools Student Advisory Group* and the *Organizational Advisory Table* (internal group which includes union partners and employees), provided further input into the draft policy).

In Fall 2022, the consultation focused on engaging with students who experience bullying. We know that schools and the education system are built from systems that are unfair. They cause harm. Students who self-identify as Indigenous, Black, Racialized, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ and students with disabilities often experience bullying more often than other groups. We wanted to hear from these students to better understand how we could improve the policy and create accompanying procedures that would help build a school environment that is safe, supportive and relevant to them.

To create safety, all conversations were held at the students' schools and facilitated by a youth (a recent HWDSB graduate with lived experience of bullying). The conversations and analysis of the input were grounded in the following Guiding Principles (Appendix C)

- Centering student voices;
- Acknowledging social location;
- Addressing bias;
- Reciprocity.

Historically, data gathered from Indigenous, Black, Racialized, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ and people with disabilities has been used to harm communities. It has been extractive and used as a tool of control and

coercion. We understand that our work has the potential to continue this harm. To help address this reality, we adopted a student-centred, community-co-created approach.

We received close to three hundred items of feedback from students in twelve sessions in October 2022. Recommendations from this phase of consultation are included in Appendix D and the Appendix E Infographic. This information was shared back with the students to support transparency and accountability.

PHASE 2 CONSULTATION NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2022

Feedback gathered through Phase 1 of the consultation was reviewed by the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy Working Group. The Working Group then determined the questions that would be posted online as part of the public consultation. In order to gather purposeful input, the Working Group decided on two questions:

- Do you think the policy is ready to move to approval?
- What else needs to be added to the Policy?

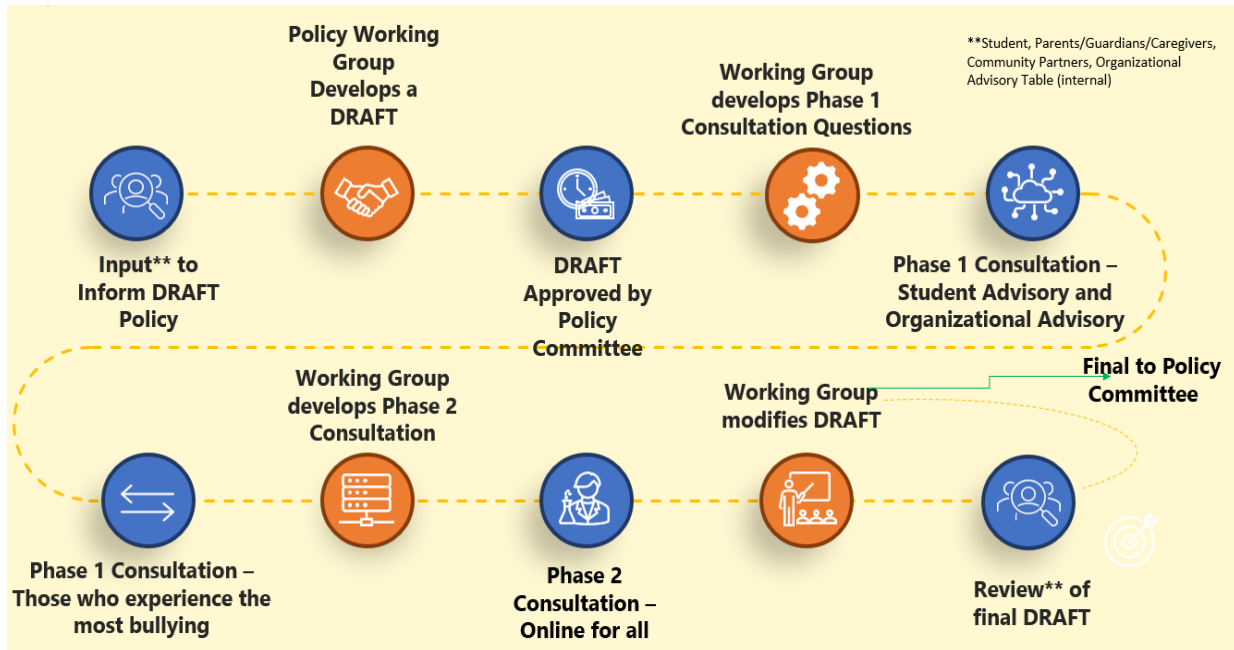
Sixty survey responses were received and the summary is included in Appendix F.

As part of the Phase 2 Consultation, the Safe Schools Parent Advisory Group, Community Advisory Group and Organizational Advisory Table reviewed the student consultation information from Phase 1 and provided an opportunity for feedback.

APPENDIX A – COMMITMENTS TO STUDENTS, PARENTS/GUARDIANS/CAREGIVERS AND STAFF

- Being transparent with students, parents/guardians/caregivers, staff and community about the Safe Schools Action Plan – what we are doing to be shared regularly – website, reporting to Trustee (4 times a year);
- Creating structures to ensure student, parent/guardian/caregiver, staff and community voice inform school and board plans and that these plans are publicly shared and reported on;
- Improving engagement with attention to working with those impacted by decisions;
- Building relationships and trust through our actions – listening and responding and being accountable at the school and system-level for improvement in student safety and well-being.

APPENDIX B – BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION POLICY DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP



APPENDIX C – GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF FACE-TO-FACE STUDENT CONVERSATIONS/CONSULTATIONS



Guiding Principles

The consultation was grounded in the following guiding principles. The principles informed our decisions and actions.



Centering Student Voices

We are working closely with students to help us understand what we heard and provide context for their comments. We are also focusing our findings on themes and stories of their experiences. We use direct quotes from them wherever possible.



Acknowledging Social Location

We also understand that gathering information is a reciprocal, highly relational experience. We are changed by what we hear and learn. We also show up in spaces with students with our own biases, lived experiences and values. This means who we are helps us make sense of what we hear; it also can influence how we group themes and report on findings.



Addressing Bias

To help balance the realities outline above, we adopted a co-analysis process. This means that two team members with different sets of identities and experiences grouped the themes and then talked about what they learned and found. We then shared the themes back with students and the working groups for additional comments/feedback.



Reciprocity

As a school board backed by institutional power, we must be mindful of the burden placed on students, families, and community members whenever we solicit their voices as part of a consultation process. We cannot ask of those with less power, without honouring their time and demonstrating that we value their contributions in some way. Reciprocity, rather than extraction, must guide our engagements. In the spirit of reciprocity, students were provided with food and a gift card at each engagement session.

APPENDIX D – RECOMMENDATIONS FROM STUDENT CONVERSATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Recommendations

Students were clear about what they would like to see in both the policy and accompanying procedures. Below are the four main themes that came from the consultation.

01

Reporting Bullying

There are various pathways and timelines for reporting for students who self-identify as Indigenous, Black, Racialized, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ and students with disabilities. Shared identity and trust built over time play an important role in when/who students report bullying.

Revise the language in the policy to more clearly reflect this reality for students holding these identities.

02

Engaging Parents/Caregivers & Families

Students identified parents as the primary place where they report bullying. This finding is supported in the literature. It indicates the strength and importance of these relationships.

Revise the language in the policy to reflect an asset-based approach.

03

Action in Schools

Student feedback confirms the need for an increase in visibility and availability of supports in schools. Their feedback will help inform the development of the procedures.

Invite students to share their suggestions for procedures. Provide timely updates about how their ideas informed our actions.

04

Anti-Racism-Anti-Oppression

This consultation confirms students and staff learning related to bullying and its connections to identity, particularly race, and discrimination need greater emphasis. Students experience bullying and oppression connected to the diverse identities they hold.

Anchor the policy in an anti-racism, anti-oppression framework (ARAO) to address the systemic inequalities related to bullying.

APPENDIX E – WHAT WE HEARD INFOGRAPHIC

WE HEARD YOU

What did we do? In October 2022, we invited you to share your thoughts in HWDSB's Draft Bullying Prevention & Intervention Policy, because your unique identities and experiences matter. Here's a summary of what you shared with us.



"I USED TO BE BULLIED IN ELEMENTARY CUS OF MY SKIN COLOR BUT NOW I'VE LEARNED TO LOVE MY BLACK SKIN" STUDENT

Recommendation: Action In Schools

Increase the visibility and availability of supports in schools.
Your ideas will help us create the procedures for this policy.

History teaches us that data gathered from Indigenous, Black, Racialized, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ and people with disabilities has been used as a tool of control and coercion. When something we do is not working or harming people, we talk about it with those who have been hurt or harmed so we can fix it. They will know the most about what doesn't work and what we can do better.

"BY REACHING OUT TO ANY BLACK TEACHERS JOIN THE BSA AND TELL YOUR EXPERIENCE TO SOMEONE THAT WILL UNDERSTAND" STUDENT

Recommendation: Report Bullying

Change the language in the policy to clearly reflect how shared identity and trust play an important role in reporting bullying.

We received close to 300 items of feedback from students with I2 sessions in October 2022. Students who self-identify as Indigenous, Black, Racialized, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ and students with disabilities experience a very high percentage of bullying and/or have witnessed bullying. You spent most of the time sharing ideas about how to support other students experiencing bullying and what changes need to be made in schools when it comes to reporting bullying. Most students we talked to had less to say about cyberbullying.

"THE BEST WAY A SCHOOL CAN SUPPORT STUDENTS WITH DIVERSE IDENTITIES IS HAVING PEOPLE IN THAT SCHOOL WHO UNDERSTAND THOSE INDIVIDUALS IN SOME OF THOSE SITUATIONS" STUDENT

Recommendation: ARAO

More is needed to connect bullying to identity and discrimination in schools. Anchor the policy to an anti-racist, anti-oppression framework (ARAO) to address the system inequities related to bullying.

You told us to:

- Increase communication about resources that already exist in schools
- Increase number of safe supports available in schools, like clubs, chillout spaces, counselling. You also want these supports to reflect the identities of students who access them.
- Increase learning opportunities about identity, discrimination and race for both staff and students.
- Increase supports for students who bully.

"WHEN I WAS GETTING BULLIED I WOULD TRY TO HIDE IT ...TELLING PEOPLE HELPS SO IF YOUR BEING BULLIED TELL PARENTS AND TEACHERS" STUDENT

Recommendation: Engage Families

Parents/caregivers/guardians are the primary place students go to talk about bullying, followed by teachers & friends. Change the policy to reflect the strength of these relationships.

Currently, the policy states:

"Students, staff and parents to report incidents of bullying to the Principal immediately when they experience it, witness it or have it reported to them..."

The conversation continues.

Stay connected: safeschoolsadvisory_community@hwdsb.on.ca



APPENDIX F - ONLINE CONSULTATION REPORT – DECEMBER 2022

Participation

The survey was open between December 2 and December 16, 2022, and we received 60 survey responses. The majority of responses were from parents (66% or 38 responses). We also heard from students (17% or 10 responses), staff members (9% or 5 responses) and community members (9% or 5 responses).

Outreach

Phase 2:

- An email to all website subscribers
- Link shared on social media
- Link added to the [Safe Schools Action Plan webpage](#).
- A link to the post and survey added to the [Public Consultation webpage](#).
- Direct email to HWDSB committees and advisory groups through the associated Superintendent
- Direct email invitation for participation to all participants of Safe Schools Action Plan Advisory and Working Groups

Findings

We asked participants the following question: “Do you think this policy is ready to move to approval?” The majority of respondents answered ‘no’ – they did not think the policy was ready to move to approval (60% or 36 responses). 40% (or 24) of respondents answered yes.

The second question in the survey gave respondents an opportunity to identify what may need to be added to the policy. Below are common themes:

- **Supports are needed both for the bullied and the bullies**, such as social work support, as they may have anger or pain they are dealing with. Suspensions and expulsions should not be the only action taken.
- As a preventative measure, **a focus on social and emotional needs, healthy relationships, and positive peer interactions is needed**. One described that this is just as important as a focus on academics, but already stretched staff may be stretched to thin to support this.
- **“Actual action when bullying takes place.”** Respondents spoke about the need to take all reports seriously, hold staff accountable when they do not act, and being clear about the roles and responsibilities for every person in the school.
- **Bystander education** is needed and support for people who witness bullying.
- **Continue engaging with students and community partners as the policy is implemented**. Find ways to gather student voice beyond survey collection.
- **Specific to how the policy is written**, respondents had the following feedback:

- Clearer definition of bullying and broaden the scope of bullying (e.g., to include passive-aggression and micro-aggression bullying);
 - Clear definition of harm (e.g., “Does eye rolling cause harm?”);
 - Too much legalese;
 - Heavy emphasis on matters of group identity.
- The following feedback should be considered for when the **procedure is written**:
 - Clearer language about consequences;
 - Clearly articulate roles and responsibilities of staff, and other adults in the building such as before/after school care agencies, community organizations, etc.;
 - Include how incidents will be communicated to staff and parents;
 - Articulate how students can report incidents if they do not feel safe telling their teacher/principal.
- The following comments are **out of scope for this policy**:
 - Include other examples of bullying, such as bullying in the workplace and student to staff bullying;
 - HWDSB should not bully families into wearing masks;
 - Violence in schools is escalating and police should have more presence in schools.

Policy Consultation Feedback and Response Chart

POLICY: Bullying Prevention & Intervention Policy

Initial Engagement: Informing the Revised Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

Community engagement is part of the ongoing work of the Safe Schools Action Plan. The policy approved for consultation in spring 2022, was reviewed and revised by the *Policy Working Group* based upon input from:

- Student, parent/guardian/caregiver, community and staff feedback during the Panel Review Process;
- the Parent Advisory Group;
- the Community Advisory Group and
- the Organizational Advisory (internal HWDSB group)

Phase 1 (focused feedback on the policy approved for consultation)

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Working Group identified a series of questions to gather feedback based upon the group being consulted. This included:

- Safe Schools Student Advisory Committee
- Organizational Advisory Committee (union partners and staff)
- Special Education Advisory Committee
- Parent Involvement Committee

In the fall of 2022, we gathered the voices of students who experience bullying at a disproportionate rate, specifically those who self-identify as Indigenous, Black, Racialized, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ and students with disabilities. Students were invited to participate in face-to-face conversations at their school, through pre-existing groups in schools and facilitated by a recent HWDSB graduate with lived experience as someone who experienced bullying.

Phase 2 (online consultation, Safe Schools Parent Advisory and Community Advisory Committees)

Subsequent to the focused consultation, all members of the HWDSB community had the opportunity to respond to a brief survey on the readiness of the policy and to provide any feedback on what might still need to be addressed. The Safe Schools Parent Advisory and Community Advisory Committees also responded to the recommendations gathered from the student conversations.

Categories	Comment/ Feedback	Response
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Purpose	Go beyond the minimum requirements to make sure the policy is relevant and meaningful to those who will be most impacted by it. Students who identify as Indigenous, Black, Racialized, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ and people with disabilities need the policy to address not only their experiences of bullying but also the systemic oppressions they face within education.	We have grounded the policy in an anti-racist/anti-oppressive framework so that the impacts of bullying as it relates to oppression are addressed.
Guiding Principles	The guiding principles of the policy need to be aligned with the intersectional identities of the students and communities we serve. Historically, data gathered from Indigenous, Black, Racialized, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ and people with disabilities has been used to harm communities. HWDSB's consultation work has the potential to continue this harm.	<p>We adopted a student-centred, community co-created approach, using the following principles which are explained further below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Centering Student Voices We worked closely with students and community members to help us understand what we heard and provide context for their comments. We are also focused our findings on themes and stories of their experiences. We used direct quotes from them wherever possible. 2. Acknowledging Social Location We know gathering information is a reciprocal, highly relational experience. We were changed by what we heard and learned. We also understood that we show up in spaces with students with our own biases, lived experiences and values. Who we are helps us make sense of what we hear; it also can influence how we group themes and report on findings. 3. Addressing Bias To help balance the realities outline above, we adopted a co-analysis process. This means that two team members with different sets of identities and experiences grouped the themes and then talked about what they learned and found. We then shared the themes back with students and the working groups for additional comments/feedback. 4. Reciprocity As a school board backed by institutional power, we must be mindful of the burden placed on students, families, and community members whenever we solicit their voices as part of a

		<p>consultation process. We cannot ask of those with less power, without honouring their time and demonstrating that we value their contributions in some way. Reciprocity, rather than extraction, must guide our engagements. In the spirit of reciprocity, students were provided with food and a gift card at each engagement session.</p>
<p>Intended Outcomes</p>	<p>Students who identify as Indigenous, Black, Racialized, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ and people with disabilities need the intended outcomes in the policy to address their unique needs based on their intersectional identities. Student feedback confirmed the need for an increase in visibility and availability of supports in schools.</p> <p>While one of the intended outcomes in the current policy draft states, “student-centred learning environments where identity, voice and lived experience are affirmed and honoured as an essential part of learning,” the supports created to address this outcome as it relates to the needs of students who identify as Indigenous, Black, Racialized, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ and people with disabilities will need to be specifically outlined within the accompanying procedures.</p>	<p>We created a one-page infographic summarizing the themes and recommendations and shared this with students who participated in the consultations. We wanted to confirm that themes reflected the ideas shared by the students. We also made a commitment to provide timely updates about how their ideas informed our actions. Part of our communication and feedback to students included an invitation for them to share their suggestions for any procedures that will support this policy.</p> <p>We also created a summary report for the Safe Schools – Policy & Procedure working group that outlined themes, made recommendations, and provided suggested language for the revisions to the policy. We wanted to confirm our suggested revisions aligned not only with the themes but also reflected the previous work of this group.</p>
	<p>Phase 2 respondents spoke about the need to take all reports seriously, hold staff accountable when they do not act, and being clear about the roles and responsibilities for every person in the school.</p>	<p>Added an intended outcome: accountability and transparency when an incident of bullying is reported.</p>

Terminology	<p>The consultation focused specifically on the definition and examples of cyberbullying because we recognized the growing influence of online platforms, especially social media, on youth culture. Feedback from students confirmed that the definition and description of cyberbullying in the policy reflected their experiences.</p>	No further revision necessary.
	<p>A small number of responses during Phase 2 consultation related to the terminology or definitions in the policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearer definition of bullying and broaden the scope of bullying (e.g., to include passive-aggression and micro-aggression bullying) • Clear definition of harm (e.g., “Does eye rolling cause harm?”) 	The definitions used in the policy align with PPM 144 and as such cannot be changed within the policy. We will address the concern in any accompanying procedures, in particular, the learning related to bullying for students and staff.
Action Required	<p><u>Engaging Parents/Guardians/Caregivers and Families</u> Students identified parents as the primary person they report bullying to.</p>	We revised this section to reflect an asset-based approach that builds on the strength of these relationships.
	A repeated theme in all phases of the consultation was the need for greater student engagement and voice in all aspects of the policy and any accompanying procedures.	The sub-heading of this section has been changed to: Engaging Students/Parents, Guardians, Caregivers and Families. The entire section has been updated to include a greater focus on student engagement.
	<p><u>Prevention and Awareness Raising</u> Students asked for an increase in learning opportunities about identity, discrimination and race for both staff and students. They also asked for an increase in supports for students, including those who engage in bullying behaviours, experience bullying and bystanders.</p>	The current policy names, “student and staff learning related to bullying” under board responsibilities of the board and school. We recommended that the language of the policy also names learning related to identity, particularly race, and discrimination. The entire section has also been updated to reflect greater supports for every student, including specific supports for students who hold diverse identities.
	Phase 2 consultation identified the need for continued community engagement, in particular, the involvement of community partners as the policy is implemented.	An additional responsibility of the board has been added to the policy in this section: engaging with community partners to support bullying prevention and awareness raising.

	<p>Reporting Bullying</p> <p>There are various pathways and timelines for reporting bullying for students who self-identify as Indigenous, Black, Racialized, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ and students with disabilities. Students identified parents/caregivers/guardians as the primary people they go to talk about bullying, followed by teachers, friends and other trusted adults. Shared identity and trust built over time play an important role in who student report bullying to and when they report it.</p>	We revised the policy to honour the various pathways and timelines for reporting bullying that students have identified.
	Feedback identified the need for more clearly defined roles and responsibilities for staff.	We revised the policy to include: “staff report incidents of bullying to the principal immediately when they witness it or have it reported to them;”
	<p>Monitor and Review</p> <p>The consultation confirmed the research: that students who self-identify as Indigenous, Black, Racialized, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ and students with disabilities experience a very high percentage of bullying and/or have witnessed bullying.</p>	The policy is anchored in an anti-racism, anti-oppression framework (ARAO) to address the systemic inequalities related to bullying.
	Greater accountability and transparency when bullying is reported and the connection between bullying, identity and systems of oppression must be clear in the policy.	The monitoring and review of the policy now includes: tracking of all incidents-of bullying including regularly reviewing all bullying related suspensions and expulsions to identify and mitigate patterns related to identity, discrimination and systems of oppression;
Progress Indicators	The need for greater student engagement in all aspects of the policy and procedures.	This section is revised to include student/youth engagement approaches as tools to assess the intended outcomes.
Overall Readability/understandability	n/a	n/a
Items for the procedure	Many of the ideas shared during the policy consultation have implications for the procedures. For example, the tools and practices that have been or will be developed for use in schools such as student safety plans, bullying awareness & prevention week learning, and so on.	We will include these elements in any accompanying procedures.
Other		