

ANTI-BULLYING SCHOOL POLICY

for

Caledon Catholic Elementary Schools

Holy Family
Pope John Paul II
St. Cornelius
St. John the Baptist
St. Nicholas



Introduction

This policy was developed as part of a Comprehensive Bullying Prevention Initiative in Caledon schools. The initiative was developed and facilitated by the Public Health Nurse from the Region of Peel Health Department. Each school is guided by a steering committee comprised of the public health nurse, students, parents, and school staff. By working together our aim is to build on the strengths of the school community and further develop a safe, caring environment for everyone.

An initial draft of the policy was created by the Public Health Nurse based on research and recommendations from various internationally renowned experts. Representatives from each of the individual school steering committees then met together, with the Public Health Nurse, in a collaborative process to formulate a policy that would best meet the needs of the Catholic Schools in Caledon. This policy reflects the opinions and voices of parents, teachers, principals and vice principals from each of the participating schools.

This document aims to provide Caledon schools with a clear and effective plan for dealing with bullying situations in a consistent manner within each school and amongst the schools. Members of the school community will know what defines bullying behaviour, their rights and responsibilities, consequences for bullying behaviour and the existence of support for those being bullied. This policy is being introduced to all parents, staff and students in the school community.

Acknowledgements

Research Base:

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Holy Family – Nancy Godfrey, Tony McLaughlin, Sheldon Nadon, Dave
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Anti-Bullying School Policy

Statement of Intent / Purpose:

This school is committed to providing a safe, friendly and caring environment that will allow students to learn to the best of their ability. To that end, we declare that bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at this school. It is our intent that anyone who knows that bullying is happening will know what to do and be assured that incidents will be dealt with effectively.

Expected Behaviours:

- Respect for self and others
- Accept responsibility for one's own actions
- Acceptance of others and tolerance for differences
- Not initiate, encourage or become involved in bullying incidents

**refer to school code of conduct for further behavioural expectations

Definition of Bullying:

A person is being bullied when he or she is exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons. (Olweus, 1993)

- Bullying is characterized by:
 - A deliberate intention to harm
 - A power imbalance
 - Repetitive actions over a period of time
- Hurt experienced by a victim of bullying can be external (physical) or internal (psychological, emotional)
- Bullying can be direct (face-to-face) or indirect (behind someone's back)
- Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. Examples include:
 - Physical - *hair pulling, biting, hitting, locking in a room/locker, pushing, any form of physical attack, stealing or damaging someone's personal property*
 - Verbal - *threats, name-calling, teasing, abusive language, sexual remarks, abusive telephone calls, extortion, rumours or racial slurs*
 - Psychological - *rude gestures and faces, manipulating relationships, ruining friendships, excluding, ignoring, isolating, malicious notes or emails*

Strategies for Preventing Bullying:

Bullying prevention will be addressed using a comprehensive model. In order to be effective, strategies must be in place on many levels and involve all students, school staff, parents and the community. Strategies may include:

- Developing awareness, skills and prosocial attitudes through instruction and education
- Promoting a safe and cooperative school climate through school-wide events and playground activities
- Modeling positive interaction and conflict resolution
- Providing support through ongoing communication, information and use of resources

Rights and Responsibilities:

Students

- Have the right to feel safe and not be bullied in any way by anyone
- Have both the right and responsibility to tell an adult about bullying situations (*no one has the right to be protected by their peers or a code of silence when they physically or psychologically abuse others*)
- Have the responsibility to unite as peers and take a strong stance to prevent and stop bullying (*bullying stops if most students decide it's not acceptable and support each other to actively disapprove, intervene assertively and tell adults*)

Parents

- Have the responsibility to contact the school if they know or suspect their child is involved in bullying
- Have the right to expect support, follow-up and appropriate action for bullying situations
- Have the right to be contacted if their child is involved in bullying situations
- Have the responsibility to support the school in handling bullying situations with their child

School Staff

- Have the responsibility to know how to effectively identify and deal with bullying situations
- Have the right to expect and obtain support from other staff, parents and community agencies to deal with bullying in the school
- Have the responsibility to report and track bullying behaviours
- Have both the right and the responsibility to empower students to take a stance against bullying and seek adult support

Procedures for Dealing with Bullying Situations

Steps school staff will take:

- Intervene and stop the behaviour
- Gather information and assess the situation
- Clearly identify the bullying behaviour with involved students
- Report / record the incident (*as appropriate*)
- Respond to and resolve the situation - provide education and consequences
- Monitor and follow up with involved students and parents

Reporting:

- Students are encouraged to report incidents of bullying they experience or witness to any staff as soon as possible
 - *this can be done verbally by the student, with a peer or through a parent*
 - *confidential mailboxes located throughout the school will also provide opportunity for students to leave written notes (students will be expected to sign their names)*
- Staff will report incidents of bullying to the classroom teachers of involved students
- School administration will follow-up with reported incidents as needed
- Parents will be informed of all reported incidents
- A 'Bullying Incident Report' form will be completed for incidents of bullying
 - *completed forms will be kept in the office and used for tracking repeated behaviours/trends*

Responding:

The goals of intervention are to:

- (a) Reconcile students
- (b) Provide support, ensure safety and develop skills for students who are bullied or observe bullying behaviours
- (c) Encourage the development of empathy, responsibility, accountability and social competencies for those who engage in bullying behaviours

All incidents of bullying behaviour will be addressed. The following are examples of responses that may be used by the school to address reported incidents.

- **Restorative Approach – *the aim is to reconcile the students and repair relationships***
 - Provide a genuine apology
 - Provide restitution for damaged / stolen property
 - Involved students may meet as a group to problem solve and deal with the incident
- **Formative Consequences – *the aim is to build awareness and skills that promote responsibility and prosocial behaviour through participation in structured activities***
 - Complete a self-reflection activity (*this may require a parent's signature*)
 - Research assignment on bullying (*may be required to present to peers*)
 - Create a story or role play about helping students who are bullied
 - Supervised role as a reading buddy or reading a novel about bullying to younger children
 - Provide opportunity for education, counseling or participation in social skills groups
- **Sanctions – *the aim is to provide time apart to think about actions, get appropriate help and protect other students***
 - Separation from other students
 - *for a period of time*
 - *to complete activities assigned as formative consequences/ to protect other students*
 - Limit participation in activities / privileges
 - *for example: field trips, clubs, sports teams, assemblies, school dances*
 - *for a period of time*
 - Meeting with parents
 - *at parent or school request to problem solve and support the student*
 - Police involvement
 - *talk with the student about incidents involving personal harm, threats*
 - Suspension
 - *if a prohibited weapon is brought to school*
 - *when intentionally causing physical or emotional harm to others*
 - *for any incident that contravenes the law*
 - *for repeated incidents when other interventions have been tried and proven ineffective*

** refer to your school's code of conduct for further details
- **Support – *the aim is to provide a sense of safety and develop skills to empower students who experience or witness bullying***
 - Individual and/or group meetings
 - *to debrief incidents, validate feelings, provide support*
 - *to formulate plans for ensuring a sense of safety at school*
 - Education
 - *strategies to avoid and deal with bullying situations*
 - Provide opportunities for enhancing personal strengths and leadership skills