



Holy Spirit School Bullying Prevention Policy 2011

(Adapted from Caledon Anti-Bullying School Policy)

Vision Statement

Holy Spirit Catholic Elementary School is committed to providing a **safe, inclusive, peaceful and caring** environment to all students, parents / guardians, and staff. It is our goal that any member of our school community will understand and be able to identify bullying and that incidents will be dealt with through the lens of our **Catholic** virtues. Therefore, we will strive to celebrate and focus on **positive, restorative and peer-advocating** behaviours.

Introduction

This policy was developed as a part of a Comprehensive Bullying Prevention Initiative in Caledon schools. The initiative was developed and facilitated by a committee comprised of the public health nurse, students, parents, and school staff. By working together, their aim was 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 the schools' steering committees met together, to formulate a policy that would best meet the needs of the Catholic Schools in Dufferin Peel. This policy reflects the opinions and voices of parents, teachers, principals and vice principals from each of the participating schools.

This document has been adapted for Holy Spirit School from the initial draft of the policy of the Caledon schools. It provides a clear and effective plan for dealing with bullying situations in a consistent manner within our school. Members of the school community will know what defines bullying behavior, their rights and responsibilities, consequences for bullying behavior and the existence of support for those involved in bullying situations. This policy was introduced to all parents / guardians, staff and students in the Holy Spirit Catholic School community on March 30, 2011.

Bullying Prevention School Policy

Statement of Intent/Purpose:

This school is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, 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 is aware of bullying occurrences will know what to do and that it will be dealt with.

Definition of Bullying:

Bullying is typically a form of repeated, persistent, and aggressive behaviour directed at an individual or individuals that is intended to cause (or should be known to cause) fear and distress and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, or reputation. Bullying occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance. (Ministry of Education, 2009)

- Bullying is characterized by:
 - A deliberate intention to harm.
 - A power imbalance.
 - Repetitive actions over a period of time.
- 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, spitting, swarming, locking in a room/locker, pushing, any form of physical attack, stealing or damaging someone's personal property etc.

Verbal- threats, name-calling, teasing, abusive language, sexual remarks, abusive telephone calls, rumors, racial slurs etc.

Psychological- Rude gestures and faces, manipulating relationships, ruining relationships, excluding, ignoring, isolating, malicious notes or technology communications (e.g. E-mails/texts/blogging/MSN/facebook) etc.

Strategies for preventing bullying:

Bullying prevention will be addressed using the Ministry of Education for Healthy School's comprehensive model. In order to be effective, strategies must be in place on many levels and involve all students, school staff, parents / guardians and the community.

Strategies may include:

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

Expected Behaviour:

- Respect for self and others.
- Accept responsibility for one's own actions.
- Acceptance of others and individual differences.
- Report incidents of bullying.
- Apply anti-bullying strategies.
- Not initiate, encourage or become involved in bullying incidents.

** Refer to school code of conduct for further behavioural expectations, which can be found in the student agenda.

Rights and Responsibilities

Students:

- Have the right to feel safe, included and not be bullied in any way by anyone.
- Have the right to know how to effectively identify bullying situations (Bullying versus conflict situations).
- Have both the right and responsibility to report bullying situations to an adult.
- Have the responsibility to unite as peers and take a 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 using appropriate strategies and report to adults*).
- **The student who demonstrates bullying behaviour does not have the right to be protected by their peers or a code of silence when they physically or psychologically abuse others.**

Parents / Guardians:

- Have the responsibility to know how to effectively identify bullying situations (Bullying versus conflict situations).
- Have the responsibility to report to the school if they know or suspect their child is demonstrating bullying behaviour or is being bullied.
- Have the right to expect follow-up and appropriate action for bullying situations.
- Have the responsibility to support the school in handling bullying situations with their child and be aware of the school policy.

School staff

- Have the responsibility to contact the parents / guardians if their child is involved in bullying situations.
- 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 / guardians, and community agencies to deal with bullying and seek adult support.
- Have the responsibility to report and track bullying situations.

- 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 for all board employees who work directly with students: (*Administration, teachers, social workers, child and youth workers, psychology staff / SLP staff, educational resource workers*):

- 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 resolve the situation – provide education and consequences
- Monitor and follow up with involved students and parents / guardians

Step for all other employees: (*e.g. bus drivers, administrative assistants, student monitors, custodial staff, plant / maintenance staff*):

- Report the incident to the administration

Please refer to the chart below for specific board employee responsibilities:

	Reporting	Responding	Supporting Students	Notifying Parents of Person being bullied and the person bullying	Delegating Responsibility
All Board Employees	☺				
All Board Employees who work directly with students	☺	☺	☺		
Principals	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺

Adapted from Safe Schools Training DPCDSB January 2010.

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 students, with a peer, or through a parent / guardian.
 - Confidential mailboxes located throughout the school will also provide an opportunity for students to leave written notes (students will be expected to sign their names).
- Staff will report incidents of bullying to the classroom teacher of involved students.
- School administration will follow-up with reported incidents as needed.
- Parents / Guardians will be informed of all reported bullying incidents.
- A “Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part 1” 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:

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

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

→ **Formative Consequences - The aim is to build awareness and skills that promotes responsibility and prosocial behaviour through participation in structured activities.**

- Complete a "Think Paper" (this will require a parent's / guardian's signature).
- Complete a "Conduct Report" with parental / guardian follow up.
- 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 the opportunity for education, counseling or participation in social skills groups.

→ **Restorative Approach – The aim is to reconcile the students and repair/build 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 and future interactions.

→ **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.
- Limited participation in activities/ privileges:
 - For a period of time.
 - For example: field trips, sports teams, assemblies, and school dances
- Meeting with parents / guardians:
 - At a parent / guardian or school request to problem solve and support the student.
- Neighbouring Police Unit Involvement:
 - For example: talk with the students about incidents involving personal harm, threats and cyber-bullying.
- Behaviours Leading to Possible Suspensions:
 - Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person.
 - Bullying (when intentionally causing repeated physical or emotional harm to others).
 - Any other activity that is an activity for which a principal may suspend a pupil under a policy of the board.
 - 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. *The aim is also to build opportunities for the student who has bullied to engage in reflection, conversation and activities that allow him/her to develop perspective/empathy, make amends, seek forgiveness and develop new, more positive social skills.***

- Individual and/or group meetings.
 - To debrief incidents, validate feelings, and provide support.
 - To formulate plans for ensuring a sense of safety at school.
- Education
 - Strategies to avoid and deal with bullying situations in conjunction with Holy Spirit Catholic School's virtues and the Peel Health Bullying Prevention Initiative.
- Provide opportunities for enhancing personal strengths and leadership skills.

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Research Base:

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Holy Family- Nancy Godfrey, Tony McLaughin, Sheldon Nadon, Dave White, Tracy Frank, Rose Darpino.

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