

BULLYING PREVENTION



A tip sheet from the York Catholic District School Board

What is the purpose of *Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy 223*?

The York Catholic District School Board values learning environments that are safe, nurturing, trusting, positive and respectful - consistent with our Gospel values. The Board believes that all bullying (physical, emotional, verbal, electronic) is a particularly insidious form of violence and that all students and educators have the right to a school environment free from bullying, harassment, threats and violence.

What is bullying?

"...a form of repeated, persistent and aggressive behaviour that is 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."

*– Policy Program Memorandum No. 144
released by the Ministry of Education
on October 4, 2007.*

Bullying can be perpetuated by individuals or groups and can include many different behaviours, such as:

- physical assault
- verbal taunts, name calling and put downs, spreading rumours, gossip
- threats and intimidation
- cyber-bullying - spreading rumours, images or hurtful comments through the use of e-mail, cell phones, text messaging, internet website or other technology

- Exclusion from peer group
- Responding with avoidance or anger to any questioning
- Hostile threatening or obscene body language
- Stealing money and/or possessions, extortion
- Lack of empathy towards others

What are the markers of bullying?

- Intent to harm
- An imbalance of power
- Threat of further aggression
- Witnessing a victim's distress



Who is involved?

The person who bullies:
Boys and girls are equally likely to be bullies. Bullies come in all shapes and sizes.

The person who is bullied:
The one thing that all children who are bullied have in common is that they are specifically targeted.

The bystander:
Bystanders are those who aid the person who bullies by doing nothing. They stand idly or look away or they can become actively involved either verbally or physically. The bystander is key in the prevention of bullying. Encourage your child to report bullying when he/she sees it.

How can parents help?

Parents can be generally unaware of the extent of the bullying and victimization problems. For these reasons, you may be uncertain how to prevent bullying.

You are one of the most important persons in the prevention of bullying. Become aware and work on the problem with your child and the school.

Each child has the right to feel safe and respected at school. As a parent, it is important for you to know that your child is safe at school, free from fear, and that the school understands bullying issues and knows how to intervene when problems occur.





Actions for parents

- Watch your child's behaviour with siblings and peers. Is it empathetic or cruel?
- Is your child able to make friends?
- You are a powerful role model for your child. Watch the examples you set at home, in the car, with other adults.
- Encourage open communication with your child to share concerns and fears with you.
- Teach children about acceptance, integrity, empathy and tolerance.
- Get involved with the school. Attend parent / teacher sessions; become involved with the Catholic School Council.
- Keep up-to-date information being sent home on bullying.

How to report bullying

1. Arrange a meeting for you and your child with the teacher and/or principal.
2. Bring to the meeting the facts in writing (who, what, where, when, why and how).
3. Work with your child and school personnel on a plan that addresses what your child needs right now in order to feel safe, what she/he can do to avoid being bullied and to stand up to any future bullying, and who she/he can go to for help.
4. Be patient. The school might need some time to investigate.
5. If you are not aware of it, ask about the school's Code of Student Conduct or Code of Behaviour.
6. Arrange a follow-up meeting or phone call.

The Ministry of Education Bullying Prevention Brochure is available in 22 languages:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/bullying.html>

This information is an excerpt from *The Bully, the Bullied and The Bystander* by Barbara Coloroso.

Contact Information

Superintendent of Education: School Leadership
or Superintendent Responsible for Safe Schools
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If your child is bullied



Don't...

- Minimize, rationalize or explain away the bully's behaviour.
- Rush in to solve the problem for your child.
- Tell your child to avoid the bully.
- Tell your child to fight back.
- Confront the bully or the bully's parents alone.

Do...

- Listen to your child. Encourage your child to talk about his / her feelings.
- Gather specifics about bullying incidents (who, what, where, when).
- Report the bully to school personnel. Work with the school.
- Develop your child's special skills and confidence. Promote assertive behaviour to develop self-confidence.

Look for possible signs of victimization:

- Fear of going to school.
- Lack of friends.
- Missing belongings.
- Drop in grades.
- Withdrawal.
- Acting out of character.
- Torn or missing clothing.
- Difficulty sleeping.
- Change in appetite.
- Being repeatedly late for school.