

Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan

Holy Cross School continuously works to provide a safe, welcoming, and inclusive learning environment for all students, staff and community members. We know that all people are created equal, in the image of God, each with unique characteristics deserving of dignity.

In accordance with the Church's teachings, Holy Cross School always commits to provide, in all of our work, an inclusive educational environment where every member of our school community can experience a safe and positive sense of belonging and well-being.

Education, Awareness and Outreach

What is Bullying?

Bullying is defined as a form of (typically) **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**.

Bullying is when one person continually uses mean, negative, harmful and aggressive words or actions towards or about another person on purpose, while fully understanding that what they are doing is wrong and hurtful but do it anyways to make themselves feel bigger and more powerful while making the other person feel small and powerless.

A power imbalance may occur between a pupil and the individual based on factors such as size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, disability or receipt of special education. Bullying usually happens when one or more students tease, threaten, spread rumours about, exclude, hit, shove, or hurt another person

Bullying can take different forms. These include:

- Physical: unwanted sexual touching, hitting, shoving, stealing, or damaging property
- Verbal: inappropriate epithets, remarks, jokes or innuendos, name calling, mocking, making sexist, sexualized, racist, homophobic, transphobic, and/or derogatory or profane comments
- Social: excluding others from a group or spreading gossip or rumours about them
- Electronic (commonly known as cyberbullying): spreading rumours, innuendos, hurtful comments, inappropriate images, cartoons or jokes, using cellphones, e-mail, text messaging, gaming platforms and/or through social media

A Positive Learning Environment is the sum total of all relationships found within the school and is a critical component of bullying prevention. A positive learning environment is accepting, equitable, and inclusive of all persons regardless of race, colour, culture, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, religion, family status, or disability. A positive learning environment engages the school community, including parents/guardians, as well as the broader community. A positive learning environment exists when all

members of the school community feel safe, respected, and actively promote positive language, behaviours and interactions.

Bullying has a profoundly negative impact on individual student’s life and overall learning environment.

Our school is a place where each student comes to with different lived experiences. As such, we commit to work with all students to ensure a common understanding of what bullying is, and how each student can make a positive contribution to our school community.

We also recognize the importance of acknowledging that bullying can occur between adults. Therefore, we must assume that our students may, at some point in their lives, have observed or directly experienced an adult exercising power over another. As such, it is the expectation of our school that all interactions between adults; staff member to staff member, staff member to parent/guardian, parent/guardian to staff member, are always rooted in mutual respect and dignity and model the behaviours we expect of our students. If we don’t include these expectations, we risk creating the belief in our students that adults don’t manage our own behaviour or hold ourselves accountable in a way that we expect from them.

Holy Cross School recognizes the importance of teaching our students the difference between bullying, rude or mean behaviour, and conflict, while respecting all as actions that can be upsetting to any student. **People sometimes confuse conflict with bullying, but they are different.** Conflict between students does not always mean it’s bullying. Conflict occurs between people who have a disagreement, a difference of opinion or different views. When there is conflict, each person feels comfortable expressing their views. Children learn at a young age to understand that others can have different perspectives than their own. Developing the ability to gain perspective takes time and continues into early adulthood.

Source: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/bullying-we-can-all-help-stop-it>

	CONFLICT	RUDE	MEAN	BULLYING
Frequency	Typically, infrequent. Can sometimes be occasional			Repeated
Intent	Typically, not planned or intentional. Most often is spontaneous	Can be intentional or non-intentional, but most often spontaneous	Usually intentional, but most often is not planned	Planned and intentional
Who is hurt?	All parties are upset	Can cause hurt feelings for one or all parties	Can deeply hurt one or all parties	The target of the bullying is upset and hurt
Cause	Most often a disagreement, argument or difference of opinion	Thoughtlessness, poor manners, narcissism, etc.	Anger, impulsive cruelty	Planned and intentional actions to gain control by the bully over the victim
Taking responsibility	All parties take responsibility for their own actions	Rude or mean person accepts responsibility and typically exhibits remorse for their behaviour and actions		The bully blames the victim
Who wants a resolution	Typically, an effort is made by all parties to find a resolution			The victim wishes the behaviour to stop, the bully does not
Resolution	Can be resolved through mediation	Most often is resolved through mediation. Progressive Discipline measures may be used by school administration.		Difficult to resolve through mediation. Often requires the use of significant intervention and support strategies for all parties along with Progressive Discipline measures.

Source: Jennifer Astles, DASA Newsletter, January 2014, TST BOCES

Behaviours that are not bullying can still be hurtful and mean. Harmful language or behaviours may be direct or indirect, intentional, or unintentional. The Ontario Human Rights Code focuses on impact.

Even if a person does not explicitly object to the comment or behaviour it will still be appropriately addressed, through the lens of education, rooted in the teachings of our faith.

The school website, School Messenger communication system, and school Twitter account are used as to deliver information to the school community. All information related to equity, inclusion and positive school culture is posted on our school website.

The students of Holy Cross School are reminded daily of our commitment to creating a positive school culture by ensuring that we stand up for others by using Jesus as our role model. We also echo the words of Pope Francis each day, when **we encourage our students to use the gifts that God has given them, and to dream of great things.** Our school's Pastoral Team has organized our monthly school liturgical focus based upon our Focus on Faith themes and essential questions. Daily reminders to students, and monthly student-led liturgies will focus on how to use these themes are prevalent in our lives, connections to scripture, and how they can positively impact our day by supporting appropriate decision making. Our school also promotes proactive, and consistent communication with our parent community so that we can work to build school-home-parish relationships.

We are committed to the implementation of weekly classroom based Christian Meditation as source of spiritual support for our students. Sustained extra-curricular offerings (when safe to do so) for students such as teams, clubs and experiential learning opportunities are being implemented to give students an opportunity to connect with peers in social based setting.

At school, we guide our students on how to conduct themselves in the classroom, during outside play time and online. We teach them expectations for interactions that keep themselves and other safe, happy and learning.

The expectations of Holy Cross School may be different than those outside of the school setting, including the home, sporting events, or other community activities. Once students leave the classroom, our hope is that that the lessons they experience at school, combined with continued dialogue at home, help them to learn how to independently navigate different settings and interactions within the wider community.

Conversations at home that can support in-school interactions of students:

1. Do you know what bullying is? How is it different than mean/rude behaviour or conflict?
2. Is someone engaging in bullying just because they are mean to you?
3. Who are the safe people that you can go to at school for support if you are hurt/feel hurt?
4. Have you ever experienced mean behaviour? What about bullying?
5. Have you ever been mean to someone else? Do you think you have bullied someone before?
6. What do students do when they see bullying take place in school? What do you do?
7. How we interact at sports, in the community and other places may not be the same way that we interact at school. What are some of the differences for how we act at sports/community/etc. and how we act at school?
8. If someone has hurt you, intentionally or not, how do you react and get them to stop? How would you react if this situation was at school? How would you react if this happened at sport/in the community?

Policies and Procedures

The HCDSB Policies and Procedures that relate to bullying prevention and intervention:

- Policy No: II-27 Student Behaviour
 - Policy No: II-39 Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools;
 - Policy No: II-40 Bullying Prevention Intervention

Holy Cross School will communicate HCDSB Policies and Procedures by:

- Including board policies and school expectations on our school website;
 - Sharing information during school assemblies and announcements;
 - Sharing information through bulletin board postings within the school;
 - Sharing information at staff and divisional meetings;
 - Integrating Bullying Prevention and Intervention, along with Equity & Inclusion into classroom instruction, always guided by Gospel values;
 - Informing students, parents, staff members and school volunteers of our procedures for reporting incidents of bullying and safe school incidents;
 - Sharing information with parents to assist them to build awareness and knowledge about bullying;
 - School board policies will be linked to the school website and made available for community reference;
 - The policies have also been shared on the school Teams site and reviewed with all staff members;
 - All staff members have been in-serviced on all guidelines, procedures and policies and have verified via their signature on a staff list;
 - The Code of Conduct is reviewed with students, and Catholic School Council is offered the opportunity to provide their input on the Code of Conduct each academic year;
 - Staff members are reminded consistently by administration that we are to model positive interactions for our students daily and that the safety well-being of each student is our collective responsibility;
 - Staff are aware that it is their professional responsibility to respond and report all incidents of inappropriate student behaviour and are aware that supports within the school (CYC, administration, parish clergy) are available to encourage a positive resolution to any incident;

Prevention

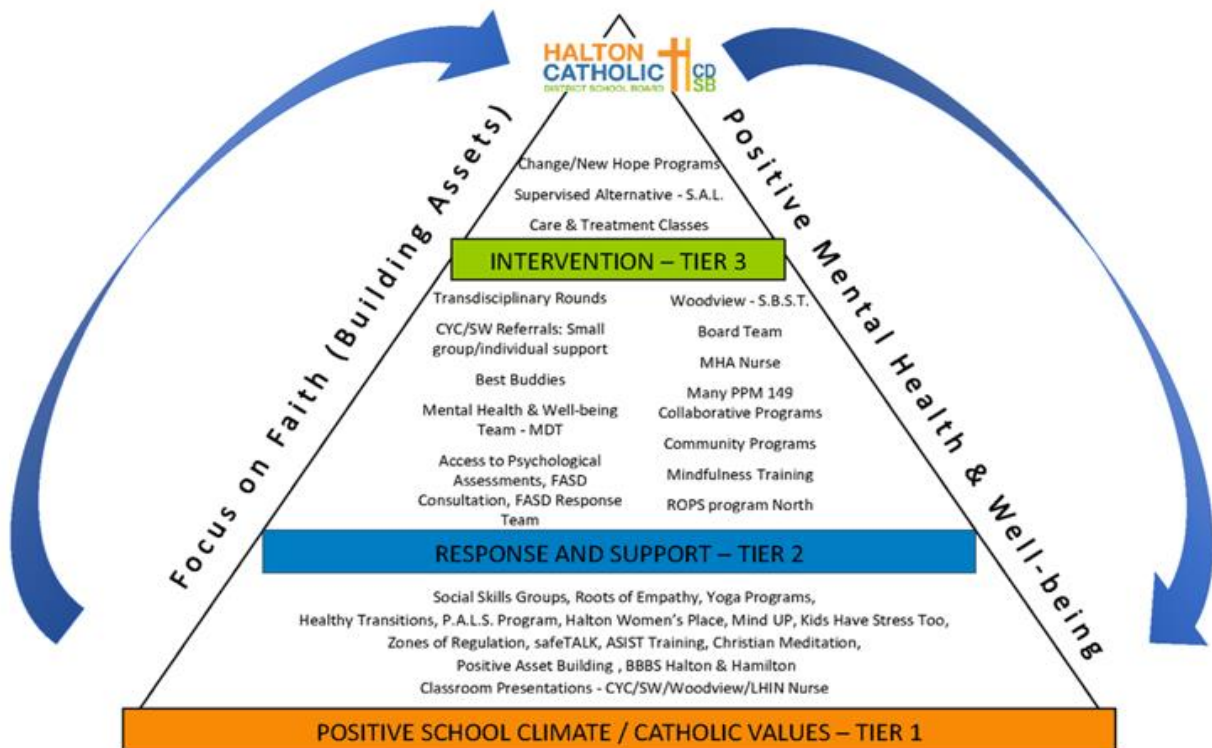
Holy Cross School will identify and promote an understanding of how to promote healthy relationships using a variety of strategies; ways to make students aware of different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. Through a whole school approach of creating and supporting a positive school climate for student achievement and well-being along, some of the positive school climate initiatives implemented at Holy Cross School include:

- Mind Up with grade 3-5 from September - June
- DREAM Team from September – June – Student Voice
- SNAP program (Stop, Now and Plan program) in Grade 2 from Jan- June
- Scoops of Kindness campaign

- Bullying Awareness Week (announcements, trivia, visuals around school, resources for classroom teachers)
- Elizabeth Frye Society presentations for grade 8's (January - March)
- Kelso Program for Kindergarten to Grade 2 (January - February)
- Running Program (March - June)
- Wellness Day for grade 7 (January)
- Kids Have Stress Too program with grade 7's (January - May)
- SEL classroom visits with grade 1 - 2 (Sept - Nov)
- Empathy Training presentations for grade 8 (November)
- Human Rights presentation for grade 5's with CYC & SW (January)
- Mental Health Awareness Week (May)
- Games Club at lunch (January - June)
- Equity and Inclusion club (January - June)
- Healthy Transitions program for grade 8's (May-June)
- CYC presentations at Staff Meeting
- CYC organizing a Bell Let's Talk Day for staff
- Self & Match program in grade 5 (January - June)
- Gr. 4 – 8 student presentations with Constable Brown – Think/Change – November/December

School staff welcome the opportunity to support students through additional clubs, teams, etc. Our school's commitment to bullying prevention and intervention is rooted in the Halton Catholic District School Board's Tiered Model of Intervention, which focuses on building assets along with positive mental health and well-being.

HCDSB Tiered Model of Intervention



Intervention and Support Strategies

Students, parents, school staff and volunteers can use the following methods to report incidents of bullying as appropriate:

- Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form;
- Tell an adult in the building;
- Parent / Teacher interviews, phone calls, agenda notes, etc.;
- Make an appointment to meet with school staff;

Should the need arise, the collaborative effort of classroom teacher, administration, CYC, SERT, student and parent/guardian will be utilized to identify and respond to a bullying situation when it happens. To support students who may be demonstrating bullying behaviours, the school will focus on providing the student with opportunities to be successful, i.e. alternative recess, CYC support, student mentors, extra supervision, multi-disciplinary team, etc. For the victim and bystanders, supports will be provided using the CYC to provide opportunities for a safe space where they can feel included and appreciated using strategies and social skills groups. Staff will support victims and aggressors through throughout the process with next steps and goals that are unique, yet achievable for every student.

As a community of faith, accountability and forgiveness are the foundation of our approach to intervention and support.

Monitoring and Review

For the 2021-2022 school year, the Safe and Caring Schools team will meet to monitor and review the Holy Cross Prevention and Intervention Plan through various meetings throughout the year.

Safe and Caring Schools Team Members:

- L. Capostagno – Classroom Teacher
- C. Sutton – Classroom Teacher
- K. Sims – Librarian
- K. Drummond – Child and Youth Counsellor
- T. Noonan – Parent Council
- P. Noonan – Parent Council
- S. Egan – Parent Council
- A. Cacciola – Principal