



OAKVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy

Oakville Public School has amongst its aims the provision of an environment in which each student is personally involved, in which each can develop as a person of integrity, social conscience and courage. To this end, we aim to establish a community in which everybody feels valued and safe, and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted. Every student has a right to enjoy his or her time at school.

This community does not tolerate bullying or harassment. Respect for others is expected.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Each member of the Oakville community shares in the following rights and responsibilities:

- To feel safe
- To respect self
- To learn and grow
- To respect others
- To be respected
- To use commonsense
- To be valued
- To support others

DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF ALL INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS TO BE FREE FROM BULLYING

- Everyone has the right to feel safe and be safe at school.
- Everyone has the right to be accepted and respected as they are.
- Everyone has the right to be happy about coming to school.
- Everyone has the right to have his or her concerns taken seriously and appropriate action taken.
- Everyone has the right to have his or her concerns dealt with in private.
- Everyone has the right to a quality educational program devoid of disruption.

AIMS

- To reinforce within the school community what bullying is and that it is unacceptable behaviour.
- To reduce the amount of bullying that occurs at Oakville Public School.
- To assist students to resolve conflicts and differences without bullying.
- To encourage all members of the school community to be alert to signs and evidence of bullying, to have a responsibility to report it to teachers, parents and/or peers.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to victims and the bullies.
- To seek parental and peer group support and co-operation at all times.
- To educate students, teachers and parents in anti-bullying actions.
- To foster a happy school climate where students feel safe and confident that teachers will listen and follow through concerns.

DEFINITION: WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour, which is usually hurtful and deliberate; sometimes continuing for weeks, months or even years and it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Underlying most forms of bullying behaviour is an abuse of power and a desire to intimidate and dominate. (Sharp & Smith, 1994)

Bullying occurs when a person is made unhappy by one or more other people, it can take several forms. Bullying is **not** the same thing as a disagreement between two people. Bullying is **not** an isolated incident of aggression between children. Disputes will take place, and will be dealt with accordingly. Unpleasant as these incidents are, they are not bullying and should not be reported as such.

There are seven key elements of Bullying:

1. An intention to be hurtful.
2. This intention is carried out.
3. The behaviour harms the target.
4. The bully overwhelms the target with his or her power.
5. There is no justification for the action.
6. Action/behaviour is repeated.
7. Bully gets satisfaction/enjoyment from hurting the target. (Rigby, 1996)

Some examples of bullying include:

- Hitting, pushing, kicking, spitting, pushing
- Teasing, mocking and using put-downs
- Using offensive names
- Making offensive comments about others or their families
- Gossip – spreading information (true or untrue)
- Hurtful looks
- Rude gestures
- Leaving someone out of a group to be mean to them
- Messing up someone's game
- Hiding, damaging, stealing someone's belongings
- Making up rumour/stories about someone
- Using threats to stop people going to the toilet or to take their money, food or other belongings
- Writing offensive notes about someone
- Bullying comes in many forms, including
- Name-calling, hurtful or racist names
- Threatening
- Sending hurtful notes
- Deliberately ignoring
- Sexual innuendo and harassment
- Writing graffiti about another

IMPLEMENTATION

Students, teachers, parents and the community will be aware of the school's position on bullying which is **zero tolerance**.

The school will also adopt a four-point plan to anti-bullying. This four-point plan is an integral part of the Oakville P S Student Welfare System and levels of discipline. The plan includes:

- Primary Prevention
- Early Intervention
- Intervention
- Post Intervention

Primary Prevention

- Professional development for staff related to bullying and the strategies to counteract it.
- Community awareness and input relating to anti-bullying, its characteristics and the schools' programs and response. (e.g. weekly Bulletin, parent forums, P & C Meetings)
- Provide programs that promote resilience, life skills and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and communication skills. (e.g. "What is Bullying")
- Provide elective and structured activities at some recess and lunch breaks (e.g., drama, dance, sports equipment)
- Staff supervision of set area in playground.
- Ensure students know and understand what behaviour is acceptable in the school. (i.e. consistent classroom/school rules displayed in the school)
- Maintain the development of student leadership and class meetings to help solve problems which arise regarding bully and the victim.

Early Intervention

- Students are to be encouraged to report bullying incidents involving themselves or others.
- Teachers to regularly remind students to report incidents. Reporting is not dobbing.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they become aware of a problem.
- Students are recognised for positive behaviours
- Teachers use a class and playground management plan if an incident of bullying occurs.

Intervention

- Once identified, the bully, victim and witnesses are spoken with, all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated.
- Consideration as to why the bullying occurred will be investigated. (e.g. The bigger picture or contributing factors)
- Both bully and victim are to be offered basic assistance and support (i.e. outside school resources through counselling may be utilised if deemed necessary)
- A meeting of relevant persons are to be convened following identification of on-going bullying behaviour. (Principal, class teacher, parents, students, other) All issues relevant to the behaviour of the student are considered.

Post Intervention

- Oakville Public School's Discipline Policy outlines appropriate procedures of the consequences for inappropriate behaviour in the classroom and in the playground.
- Possible consequences may involve:
 - I. Warning
 - II. Removal to the class supervisor or principal
 - III. Parental contact
 - IV. Negotiated contract
 - V. On-going monitoring
 - VI. Timeout from the class/ yard
 - VII. Mediation sessions with the victim to reconcile differences
 - VIII. Referral to external agencies
 - IX. Class/group changes
 - X. Behaviour guidance programs (e.g. anger management, social skills)
 - XI. Detention
 - XII. Suspension (in extreme cases)

ADVICE TO BE GIVEN TO STUDENTS WHO ARE BEING BULLIED

The student should be encouraged to –

- Tell the bully to stop. State quite clearly that the behaviour is unwelcome and offensive
- Seek help. Talk about the experience to someone who is trustworthy (Student Counsellor, parent, peer).
- Report the bullying to a member of staff and feel confident that any incident can be resolved satisfactorily

Other 'self protective' strategies that might be suggested include:

- Staying away from the bully, or places where bullying occurs.
- Be with friendly, supportive friends.

ADVICE TO BE GIVEN TO STUDENTS WHO KNOW SOMEONE ELSE IS BEING BULLIED

Students should be made aware that early intervention can defuse conflict situations before bullying sets in or gets out of hand.

Therefore, the following suggestions should be made:

- If possible, intervene as the bullying occurs by telling the bully to stop. This is very useful if the onlooking student has influence with the bully.
- Refuse to join in with the bullying.
- Support students who are being bullied – just standing by them can be enough.
- Tell an adult if you are concerned about the bullying.
- It is every student's right and responsibility to report bullying whether it happens to oneself or to someone else.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS

The following suggestions are made to parents through print materials and at Parent Information meetings.

Take an active interest

- in your child's social life
- in what is happening at school

Encourage your child

- to bring friends home
- to accept and tolerate differences in others

Build your child's self-confidence

- by recognising and affirming his/her positive qualities
- by valuing him/her for who he/she is.

Discuss with your child

- the school's expectations about behaviour
- ways to respond if his rights are infringed

Encourage constructive responses

- physical bullying or persistent teasing should be reported
- hitting back or retaliating with name-calling won't solve the problem

Set an example

- be firm, but not aggressive in setting behaviour limits
- be positive in things you say and do

Be alert for signs of distress

- unwillingness to attend school
- dropping off in academic performance
- damaged clothing and frequent loss of personal property
- loss of confidence and uncharacteristic mood changes
- withdrawal from social activities.

ACT

- If your child is being bullied at school, report it to a teacher, or the Principal. Your report will be followed up.