Halton District School Board

# Bullying Response Protocol

This protocol is followed by staff when bullying between students is observed, noticed and/or reported. *Silence sends a message that bullying is acceptable.*

**Bullying:** A one-time or repeated behaviour of an individual or group that makes the person being bullied feel afraid or uncomfortable.

## Guiding Principles:

- *Respond to every situation*
- *Prevent and repair harm*
- *Ensure transparency in the process*

## Step 1: Stop and Identify

- Intervene immediately and state what you saw (e.g. "I see physical contact," "I notice exclusion").
- Meet with impacted student(s) (e.g. "I heard...," "No one deserves to be bullied," "I'm sorry this happened").
- Centering your response for the student who was most harmed.

*For discriminatory or harmful language, follow the Discriminatory & Harmful Language Protocol.*
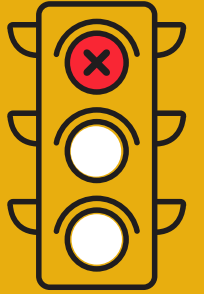
## Step 2: Explain

- Label the bullying (e.g., physical, social, etc.) and if unsure, inform students about follow-up discussions.
- Highlight the impact of their actions, state expectations that the bullying will stop and reassure the student(s) who was harmed that it's not their fault.

## Step 3: Working Together for Student Well-Being

*Ensure transparency in the process (with students, staff, parent(s)/guardian(s))*

### Connect with Administration

- Make a plan for student well-being
- Assign a liaison for parent/guardian communication
- Inquire for more information (e.g., previous incidents, interviewing witnesses, etc.) and summarize findings

### Connect with Parents/Guardians

Communicate **early and often** with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student(s) involved.

\***Do not** exclude students from class for the purpose of investigation without informing parents/guardians.

### Document/Report the Incident

All staff are required to document and **report** incidents of bullying, to the principal using the **Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form**.

## Step 4: Support and Follow Up

- Assure the student(s)/parent(s)/guardian(s) that you are taking this seriously, monitor the plan for student well-being through check-ins and ensure they are well supported.
- Administrators must respond to the Safe Schools incident and communicate findings, centreing support for all involved.
- Identify and address systemic issues that may indirectly/directly contribute to incidents of bullying.

## Step 5: Ensure Accountability

- All staff must stop, identify, explain, support, report and be accountable for bullying.
- All staff are expected to establish and maintain anti-colonial, anti-oppressive, anti-racist learning environments and engage in continuous professional development to address bullying and harmful behaviors.

**Schools must promote and support a positive and inclusive environment for all.**