



# Imagine Newsletter

## A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention

### Information for School Staff

Issue #11

#### Bullying Prevention and Character Development Go Hand in Hand



"Character development, at its best, permeates the entire life of the school as it is woven into policies, programs, practices, procedures, and interactions. It is a way of life. It recognizes that a respectful, safe and orderly school climate enhances learning". From the discussion paper "Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12" from the Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006

As part of the *Imagine* Bullying Prevention Initiative your school community has been working on a "whole school approach" to create a safer, more positive learning environment for students, staff and parents. "A school that provides a safe learning and teaching environment is one in which there is deep personal commitment to the core social values of justice, respect, compassion, inclusiveness and equity. Children must be able to observe and encounter these values in action in their daily lives, especially in the school setting, if they are to internalize and act upon them. *Imagine...a School Without Bullying: A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention*, 2004, Preface, Page 1

Character development has been described as developing the whole student--developing their understanding (observing and encountering), increasing their caring (internalizing) and supporting their action upon core ethical values. It is clear that a school that is actively working towards bullying prevention and a safer, more positive learning environment is also working towards **positive character development** for their students and the whole school community.

A study entitled "What Works in Character Education" (Berkowitz and Bier, 2005), whose purpose was to uncover and synthesize existing scientific research on the effects of K-12 character education, identified several strategies that are found in the majority of effective character education programs:

- ongoing professional training experiences for those implementing the initiative or elements of it
- peer interaction such as classroom meetings, role-playing and cooperative learning
- direct teaching of values
- integration of values into the academic curriculum
- skill training for social-emotional skills



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- an explicit agenda for what expectations the school is trying to live up to
- family and/or community involvement and support
- provision of models and mentors and
- a multi-strategy approach.

The *Imagine* Initiative has included all of these strategies to some extent, and has provided training and/or resources for use of these strategies in helping staff and parents to further teach and enact the values of justice, respect, compassion, inclusiveness and equity in their school communities. As a consequence of your school's work in *Imagine*, an investment has already been made towards the implementation of a school character development strategy. Congratulations on your work!



#### Resources on Character Development:

Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12  
[www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/literacy/booklet2006.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/literacy/booklet2006.pdf)

"What Works in Character Education" Report found at  
[www.character.org](http://www.character.org) click on Resources, click on "What Works in Character Education" at right side of screen

100 Ways to Promote Character Education  
 From Boston University Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character  
<http://www.forcharacter.com/100ways.htm>



For more information, contact Region of Waterloo Public Health 519-883-2003 ext. 5356

[www.region.waterloo.on.ca/bullying](http://www.region.waterloo.on.ca/bullying)