

Section 3: Comprehensive School-Wide Plan



Grade 3 Student
Manchester Public School



Grade 5 Student
St. Joseph School



**Imagine... A School Without Bullying:
A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention**



COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL-WIDE PLAN

STEP 1:

Engage Commitment of
School Staff

STEP 2:

Establish a School
Climate Committee

STEP 3:

Involve Parents

All schools can benefit from a bullying-prevention plan, including those that have had few incidents of bullying. A comprehensive school-wide plan is an important tool in making people aware of the harmful effects of bullying behaviour. It heightens expectations for a positive and respectful school climate, and can bring further awareness to all the activities and initiatives that contribute to a safe and supportive learning environment. A comprehensive school-wide plan is critical to any initiative that addresses the issue of bullying in the elementary school.

STEP 4:

Involve Students

An effective school-wide plan:

STEP 5:

Create and/or Amend a
School Statement for a
Respectful School
Environment

- is respectful of the school's culture and needs
- is collaborative in nature
- creates a shared understanding about the nature of bullying and its effects on the lives of individual students and the school community
- assists the members of the school community in acquiring the specific knowledge, skills, and language to respond to bullying situations
- is proactive and restorative, and punitive only when necessary
- provides a framework for bringing the plan to life
- directs the development of a wide array of prevention and intervention strategies.

STEP 6:

Build a Supervision Plan

STEP 7:

Construct a School
Climate Enhancement
Plan

STEP 8:

Develop a Response Plan

STEP 9:

Promote and Implement
the School Plan

STEP 10:

Monitor and Reassess the
School Plan

Building a comprehensive plan takes time. There is often a tension between the desire to take immediate action and the need to plan for a sustained effort. It is tempting to act as quickly as possible in order to make changes. However, the importance of the planning process cannot be understated—the very action of methodically constructing a plan is critical in engaging support from all members of the school community and developing ownership in that plan. The planning process, then, is pivotal to the success and longevity of the initiative, and is worth the time spent in developing it.



Question: How much time will it take to create a school-wide plan?

Answer: That will depend on each particular school and the quality relationships there are between each of the groups in that school community. It would be a safe estimate to project that the planning component would take from September to January.

Question: How much time will it take before the school sees results?

Answer: That depends upon the school, its circumstances, and the school community's commitment to implementing its school-wide plan. Many schools start with a modest one year plan and then revise and add to it yearly (See Section 8, Sample Plan). Monitoring the success of the interventions and reassessing the school-wide plan becomes a normal part of the school's routine and culture. In the four schools in the *Good Kid Sid* Bullying Prevention Project, a reduction in bullying behaviour was seen in year two of implementation of the project.

The next 10 sections of ***Imagine...A School Without Bullying: A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention*** detail a ten-step process for how a working group or School Climate Committee can engage the energy and time of teachers, parents, and students in the creation and implementation of a comprehensive school-wide plan to prevent bullying. Though the steps are in a numbered order, some steps may need to be addressed concurrently eg. developing a supervision and response plan. Schools are encouraged to adapt, rearrange and in some cases omit steps as necessary to suit their school's culture and resources. An action checklist is provided at the end of each step to help ensure tasks get completed.

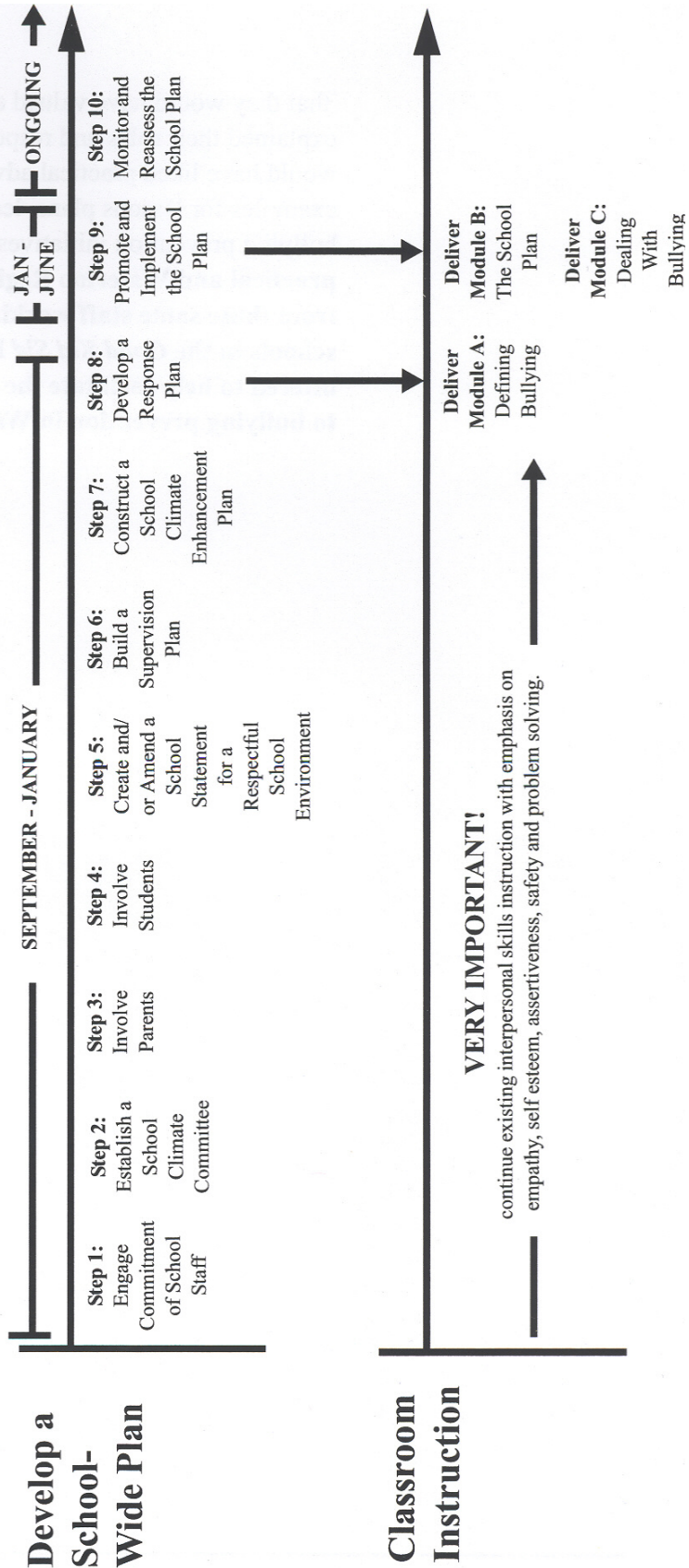
The next 10 sections also include subsections entitled "**Lessons Learned from *Good Kid Sid***". Throughout the *Good Kid Sid Pilot Project*, teachers and administrators shared their thoughts and feelings about what was working, what wasn't working and what should change with regard to their school's initiatives. They frequently mentioned that they would have valued a resource document that further explained their roles and responsibilities. They also indicated they would have liked practical advice and ideas up front, along with lots of examples for lessons plans, learning activities and forms to support the bullying prevention initiatives.



These subsections offer this very practical and Waterloo Region-specific knowledge which comes from those same staff working in and with the four elementary schools in the *Good Kid Sid* Pilot Project. This frontline wisdom is offered to help facilitate the adoption of a school climate approach to bullying prevention in Waterloo Region Elementary Schools.

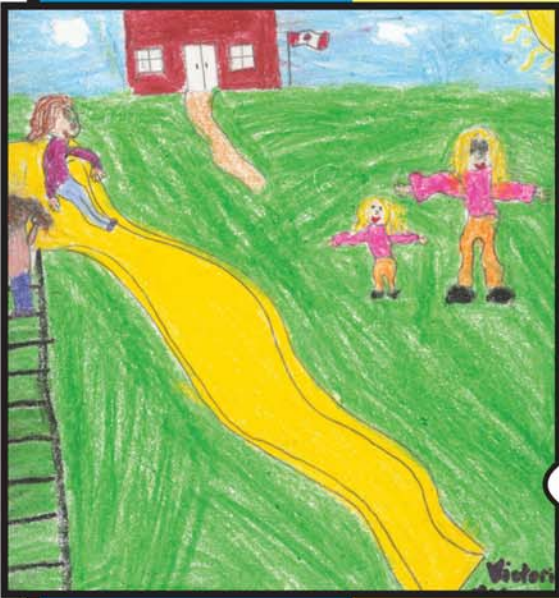
IMPLEMENTING IMAGINE... A SCHOOL WITHOUT BULLYING

Imagine... A School Without Bullying provides for the development of a comprehensive school-wide plan for bullying prevention. It also includes classroom lessons for delivery in each classroom in the school once the school plan is in place. The following timeline outlines how the development of the plan fits with classroom instruction.



Step 1:

Engage Commitment of School Staff



Grade 4 Student
Alpine Public School



Grade 5 Student
Cedarbrae Public School



**Imagine... A School Without Bullying:
A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention**



Step 1



ENGAGE COMMITMENT OF SCHOOL STAFF

STEP 1 INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING PROCESSES:

- identifying key staff to promote the initiative
- identifying bullying behaviour as a priority issue at your school
- gaining staff commitment to participate in the school climate committee
- gaining staff commitment in implementing and monitoring the plan

Imagine...A School Without Bullying: A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention (from hereon referred to as “***Imagine...***”) is a comprehensive enterprise requiring a full commitment from the school community in order to adopt a common language and encourage a consistent response from all adults to bullying behaviours. **Prior to initiating the effort, it is suggested that schools examine their current circumstances and ensure that they are prepared to commit to the work required to make a significant difference.** Schools that are implementing many other ventures concurrently or which lack the leadership required to implement such change may want address those issues prior to embarking on this initiative.

Holding informal discussions with key staff to explore potential support and interest in the initiative is a natural place to begin. Key staff may be those who have identified an interest in bullying prevention, in social skills development or in doing classroom meetings. They may be staff on a behaviour team, in special education or in ESL, or they may be those staff who have a talent in building community among the many groups comprising the school community.

Before beginning work on a comprehensive school-wide bullying prevention plan, it is imperative that the entire school staff meet to discuss the issue of bullying with regard to their school and specifically with regard to implementing this model. Invite key staff to co-facilitate the meeting with the whole staff, if appropriate.



A Discussion Outline might include:

- What is our understanding about the level of concern regarding bullying behaviours at this time?
- What would the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats be for students, staff and parents if we implemented this approach?
- What strengths, talents, and resources within our own school community and in the broader community might help us develop our plan?
- Can this school community take on this task at this time?
- Can each of you commit to doing your part in the plan? (see Roles and Responsibilities of Teaching Staff, Resource Sheet #3)
- If so, how do we best involve students and parents in this initiative?
- What kind of support would you require to implement this initiative?
- Who would be willing to work on the School Climate Committee?

Imagine... is designed to provide schools with a comprehensive framework that can be adapted and implemented with relative ease. Nonetheless, **this approach represents a significant time commitment on the part of staff. Therefore, to make best use of time, staff must agree that addressing bullying behaviours is a priority and be willing to commit to following the school plan.**



LESSONS LEARNED FROM ***GOOD KID SID***

- ▶ Specify potential roles and responsibilities of administrators, teachers and support staff at the beginning of the initiative (see Resource Sheets #1-4 later in this section for specifics). This will clarify expectations of participation and may promote better acceptance and implementation of the school climate approach.
- ▶ The role of administration is critical in supporting the work involved in adopting a school climate approach to bullying prevention. It may be helpful to contact the administrators who have worked in taking a school climate approach to bullying at their schools via the *Good Kid Sid* Pilot Project (see Section 6: Resources, page 487).



- ▶ Staff need to be reminded and acknowledged for the work they already do that helps to reduce/prevent bullying on a daily basis. For example, in the *Good Kid Sid* Pilot Project, some teachers stated that they did not conduct or did not know how to conduct classroom meetings. However, when answering their peers' questions about how they dealt with conflict in the classroom, these same teachers realized that they had indeed been facilitating classroom meetings but had not affixed that title to their efforts.
- ▶ Staff will need initial education and support to become very familiar with the language of the bullying prevention initiative and to become proficient and comfortable with the tools for implementing the school-wide plan for bullying prevention. They will need ongoing education and support to maintain commitment and enthusiasm for continued implementation, monitoring and reassessment of the school-wide plan.
- ▶ There are other roles and responsibilities that can be taken on by teaching staff or other support staff in the school and these can be shared among all the staff, just as other responsibilities are shared for school activities e.g. planning assemblies.

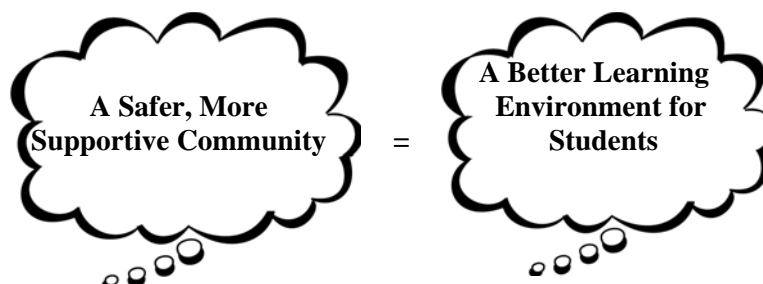
BENEFITS OF ADOPTING A SCHOOL CLIMATE APPROACH TO BULLYING PREVENTION

There may be many benefits realized from the adoption of a school climate approach to bullying prevention:

- ▶ Schools see marked behaviour change within a year or two of the plan's launch, including:
 - a reduction in bullying behaviour;
 - an overall improvement in student behaviour;
 - a decrease in administrative time being spent on behaviour problems;
 - a decrease in teaching time being spent on behaviour problems and these changes lead to **increased time for teaching and learning**;



- ▶ Compliance with the Ontario Schools Code of Conduct is increased (therefore less need to exact punishments under the Safe Schools Act);
- ▶ The approach is based on the principles of respect, justice, compassion, inclusiveness and equity--the enactment of these principles promotes an overall more positive, safe and supportive working and learning environment for all members of the school community;
- ▶ The framework is adaptable for any school community to implement and does not necessarily require more resources;
- ▶ The approach provides an opportunity for self-reflection regarding the best practices for facilitating the education of life long learners;
- ▶ The comprehensive school plan, as a living document, becomes a tool to foster continuous school improvement;
- ▶ A common language about bullying behaviour is initiated which allows for the transmission of a consistent message, which reinforces learning;
- ▶ Through community support, students become empowered to stand up for themselves and for their peers;
- ▶ Students are given opportunities to apply principles learned in the classroom to real life situations outside the classroom, thus reinforcing their learning;
- ▶ An opportunity for the engagement of all potential partners in the school community is created. Once engaged, the partners may continue the relationship to address other important issues eg. school-based nutrition, improved physical activity level in students, etc.





Resource Sheets

Benefits of A School Climate Approach

- Decrease in Bullying Situations
- Compliance with Ontario Schools Code of Conduct
- Principle-Based Approach
- Adaptable to Any School
- Allows for Self-Reflection
- Tool for Continuous School Improvement
- Supports Children at Risk
- Common Language =Consistent Message
- Coordinates Efforts
- Identifies Student Leaders
- Learning Is Applied to Real Life Situations
- Opportunity to Engage Entire School Community
- Framework Can Be Used to Serve Other Issues
- Improved Overall Student Behaviour
- Less Time Spent on Behaviour Problems
- More Time Spent on Teaching and Learning

Roles and Responsibilities of Administration

1. Participates as a member on the School Climate Committee
2. *Automatic “Second Responder” to bullying incidents/situations with students and parents
3. *Chief role model for entire school community for the appropriate use of power
4. *Actively promotes the school-wide statement and plan for bullying prevention whenever and wherever appropriate
5. *Makes time available for staff discussions on school climate at staff meetings and/or at other appropriate times
6. *Networks and collaborates with other administrators who are implementing similar initiatives for sharing of information, joint provision of education/monitoring/reassessment sessions, joint provision of student leadership days etc.
7. *Ensures all adults who work with the students (e.g. teachers, volunteers, bus drivers, etc.) are orientated to the school statement and school-wide plan for bullying prevention on an ongoing basis
8. *Supports staff with educational opportunities and time to learn and teach about creating a positive school climate and preventing bullying (e.g. classroom meetings become part of the school time table)
9. *Supports/Promotes efforts to build positive school climate e.g. gives tangible recognition for pro-social behaviour (e.g. “Gotchas”), gives support/mentoring to peer mediators
10. *Supports staff/student participation in educational events e.g. leadership training days etc.
11. *Ensures monitoring and reassessment of school-wide plan occurs regularly, including tracking of behaviour (from surveys and behaviour reports) plus analysis and interpretation of that data (as per usual with quarterly discipline reports).

*Denotes those functions that many administrators already perform

Resource Sheet #2

Roles and Responsibilities **of Teaching Staff**

1. *Become more familiar with the issue of bullying, and the school-wide statement and plan for bullying prevention
2. *Ensure classroom meetings are held at least weekly
3. *Perform supervisory duties according to the bullying prevention supervision and response plan and complete necessary forms and follow up tasks
4. *Implement Bullying Prevention Lesson Plans (these plans help to meet Ontario Ministry of Education and Training Curriculum Expectations)
5. Conduct yearly classroom survey on bullying behaviour (as provided in the classroom lesson plans)
6. *Support student efforts to prevent and/or stop bullying
7. *Support the implementation of the school-wide plan for bullying prevention e.g. participate in assemblies, in the "gotcha" program, etc.

*Denotes those things that may already be part of current duties

Other Potential Responsibilities of School Staff

1. Participates as a member of the School Climate Committee
2. Participates in promotion of school statement and school wide plan at assemblies
3. Teaches/facilitates cooperative games or other activities on the playground to keep children safely occupied or ensures that these are taught/facilitated
4. Helps to gather, analyze and share data from the yearly classroom surveys of bullying behaviour
5. Facilitates/Co-facilitates/Ensures facilitation of a lunchtime group to work with children who have bullied e.g. empathy building, social skills, restorative activities, etc.
6. Facilitates/Co-facilitates/Ensures facilitation of a group to work with children who have been bullied to increase/ improve social skills and self esteem
7. Trains and supports peer mediators or peer helpers

Step 1 Action Checklist



STEP 1: ENGAGE COMMITMENT OF SCHOOL STAFF

- ☐ Hold informal discussions with key staff to explore support and interest in the approach
- ☐ Hold a meeting with all school staff to further inform them about the issue of bullying and to introduce the School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention

MEETING TO INCLUDE:

- ☐ A review of the benefits that could be derived from implementing such an initiative
- ☐ A discussion about the match between the school climate approach and the current situation of this school
- ☐ Confirm Names of Staff Interested in Working on the School Climate Committee

Step 2: Establish a School Climate Committee



Grade 3 Student
Manchester Public School



Grade 7 Student
St. Joseph School



**Imagine... A School Without Bullying:
A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention**



Step 2



ESTABLISH A SCHOOL CLIMATE COMMITTEE

STEP 2 INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING PROCESSES:

- establishing a School Climate Committee
- outlining the duties of the School Climate Committee
- examining strategies for building momentum and sustaining the commitment of the school community.

Once the need for a bullying prevention initiative is identified as a staff priority, a School Climate Committee should be formed to initiate the plan and carry it forward. This committee could include:

- administrators
- teachers
- support staff (e.g. behaviour team members, social workers, youth workers)
- parents
- students
- other interested community members e.g. neighbourhood agency staff, community policing officers, retired teachers or social workers, school volunteers
- co-op students from high schools, colleges and universities who have long term placements in the school

Although the School Climate Committee is responsible for initiating and guiding the project, full commitment from staff members, parents, and students is essential to bring the program to life. While it may be expedient to limit membership on the School Climate Committee to school staff, consideration should be given to widening membership. All school community members may affect school climate and school culture, even if indirectly. Parents can play an important role in developing the plan and enlisting the support of other parents in the school community. The involvement of students in the development of



the school plan is also recommended to ensure relevance and effectiveness of the plan, since students are the ones who have the largest stake in the success of the project. (For more information on involving parents and students, see Steps 3 and 4.)

In addition, many schools work closely with community police officers. These officers are often very familiar with issues surrounding bullying and can provide valuable input in the development of the plan. Their input into and support for the development of the school's response plan (Step 8), in particular, can strengthen the school's ability to respond to serious incidents of bullying.

THE DO'S OF COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

Members of the working group may find these strategies useful:

- Be enthusiastic, and optimistic
- Be a co-problem solver, not an answer-giver
- Actively listen to people and acknowledge them
- Influence people with solid information, not by manipulating them
- Accept the points of view and perspectives of others
- Respect people's needs
- Allow time for questions and for reflection
- Be welcoming of the contributions of people
- Ask open and direct questions

(Adapted from
*Implementation Guide;
Integrated School-Linked
Services for Children and
Youth at Risk*,
Saskatchewan, Education,
Training and Employment
Ministry, 1994)

DUTIES OF WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

The school climate committee should consider who will be responsible for the following duties:

- arranging a meeting with parents' council to discuss the issue of bullying prevention
- promoting this parents' council meeting to all parents (since typically parents' council involves less than 25 parents per meeting)
- consulting with students to gather their ideas for the plan
- developing a draft school plan and statement incorporating input from staff, parents, and students
- presenting the draft plan and statement for discussion, feedback, and revision to students, parents and staff
- creating a promotion plan for the school statement and the plan
- engaging students and teachers in the promotion of the school statement and plan
- arranging for staff training to assist with implementation phase (e.g. explaining tracking forms, how to conduct classroom meetings, etc.)
- facilitating implementation of the school plan
- monitoring the success of the school plan
- liaising with other schools involved in bullying-prevention programs
- developing an orientation system for staff new to the school (including administrative staff and any volunteers that would have occasion to supervise children)

The committee as a whole should establish timelines for implementation of all the different stages of the school-wide plan. They should assign someone to ensure the completion of each task and should determine how they will collaborate and communicate their progress to the whole school community at each stage of the plan.



School climate committee members may find it helpful to copy the action checklists inserted at the end of each step and have them on hand as they work through the tasks in each step.

BUILDING MOMENTUM AND SUSTAINING COMMITMENT

While most people will likely support the need for a bullying prevention program, the school climate approach to bullying prevention will take time, energy and commitment. How much time it takes to see a significant decrease in bullying will depend on the school—especially its culture, its commitment and its resources. The *Good Kid Sid Pilot Project* found, that at the end of three years, the pilot sites have all had a reduction in bullying behaviours. It was also clear that the schools that spent more effort to promote an obvious, clear and consistent commitment to bullying prevention saw more progress. Clearly and consistently acting on the commitment to improve the school environment will help to engender sustainable change in the school culture.

The following ideas may help to build momentum and maintain the commitment of members of the school community throughout the development of the plan:

- involve as many interested people as possible, especially students, in planning; people become more committed to a plan they helped to create
- consider delegating some of the implementation tasks to subcommittees or other appropriate groups
- maintain communications with key groups, especially parents—communication and information sharing not only helps to maintain commitment, it also helps avoid misunderstandings that can cause unnecessary rifts in relationships
- prepare ongoing progress reports for presentation at staff, parent, and student meetings; these help everyone to see the progress toward the goals
- recognize that implementing a plan for improving a school climate toward bullying prevention takes time—time that will result in increasingly effective support for children
- take time to honour small successes



LESSONS LEARNED FROM *GOOD KID SID*

- ▶ Due to competing interests, it can be quite a challenge to secure representation from each part of the school community on the school climate committee. However, the more inclusive the committee, the more chance there is for buy-in and commitment to the plan. If you cannot recruit anyone from one part of the school community in the beginning, pay special attention to informing and including that sector as much possible as the plan progresses. If they are kept well informed, someone from that group may be recruited for the committee later on in the process.
- ▶ The energy of the school climate committee will ebb and flow; to keep the energy renewed, here are some ideas:
 - make sure to build in celebrations of successes
 - recruit and truly welcome new members (thus new energy) from time to time
 - organize and/or attend educational sessions on related topics
 - network with other school climate committees and share ideas
- ▶ Time is needed for committee members to come to a common understanding of concepts and language and to share a common vision. It is recommended that as many members as possible receive training on how to implement the school climate approach to bullying prevention.
- ▶ Make sure issues about bullying and the bullying prevention initiative are at the top of the agenda if your school climate committee encompasses more than bullying prevention issues.
- ▶ Wherever possible, make tasks obvious and concrete---most people have time pressures and need to know their time will be spent taking practical, active approaches to the issue. Checklists can be very helpful and a sample is provided at the end of each step.
- ▶ Though the administrator plays a critical role in supporting the initiative, he/she cannot be responsible for it all. When administration changes, energy and enthusiasm must be maintained for the initiative. Therefore, it is vital to have clear plans and



protocols written down, so that new administrators and staff can be orientated.

- Not everyone has experience in working on a committee and through the challenges that may arise. Choosing a chair person, creating ground rules for group conduct, deciding on regular meeting times and setting out expectations of committee members near the beginning of the process can help to sidestep problems (review sidebar on page 37 entitled The Do's of Collaborative Problem Solving).

Step 2 Action Checklist



STEP 2: ESTABLISH A SCHOOL CLIMATE COMMITTEE

- ☐ confirm membership of working group
- ☐ establish timelines and determine meeting times

ASSIGN TASKS:

- ☐ arranging a meeting with parents' council
- ☐ consulting with staff and students to gather their ideas for the plan
- ☐ developing a draft school plan incorporating input from staff, parents, and students
- ☐ drafting a school statement incorporating input from staff, parents, and students
- ☐ presenting the draft plan and statement for discussion, feedback, and revision to students, parents and staff

Step 2 Action Checklist



STEP 2: ESTABLISH A SCHOOL CLIMATE COMMITTEE

Assign tasks continued:

- ☐ creating a plan to promote the plan and the school statement
- ☐ arranging for staff training to assist with implementation phase (eg.explaining supervisory duties, how to conduct classroom meetings)
- ☐ facilitating implementation of the school plan
- ☐ monitoring the success of the school plan.
- ☐ liaising with other schools involved in bullying-prevention programs
- ☐ developing an orientation system for staff new to school (including administrative staff)

BEGIN PLANNING!

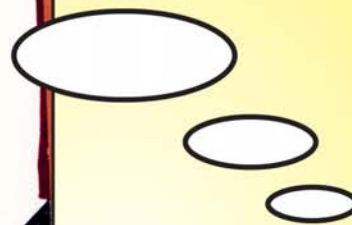
Step 3: Involve Parents



Grade 7 Student
St. Joseph School



Grade 3 Student
Cedarbrae Public School



**Imagine... A School Without Bullying:
A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention**



Step 3



INVOLVE PARENTS

STEP 3 INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING PROCESSES:

- examining the importance of involving parents in the development of the school plan
- conducting an introductory parents' meeting
- providing the support materials for the parents' meeting
- recruiting parents to sit on the school climate committee
- outlining strategies for sustained involvement of parents in the school plan

When schools reach out and invite parents to become involved in a school climate approach to bullying prevention, the ensuing partnership can have a major positive impact on both the school climate and on children's relationships with each other. The relationship between positive school climate and family involvement is reciprocal: each builds on the other. Joyce Epstein (1995) points out that strengthening the involvement of parents in school leads to "overlapping spheres of influence between home, school, and the community".

Parent-teacher partnerships are developmental in nature, promoting better co-operation between home and school and having a positive impact on the attitudes of students, teachers, and the parents themselves. Parental involvement in a school climate approach to bullying prevention promotes cooperation between home and school, which in turn fosters improved student academic achievement, behaviour, and self-concept.

Parents and teachers collaborating on a school climate approach to bullying prevention share a common basis for action. Sustained effort and commitment will secure the partnership's success. The extent to which parents are involved in the development of the bullying prevention plan is the decision of each individual school.



The approach outlined here involves a special meeting between the staff on the School Climate Committee and the Parent Council to discuss the problem of bullying and to ask parents for their ideas concerning the development of a school-wide plan, as well as for volunteers to participate in the School Climate Committee. Resource materials to support this meeting include the following:

- Parent Council Meeting Draft Agenda (Page 48)
- Bullying Quiz and Answer Sheet (Resource Sheets #5, #6 & #7)
- A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention: An Overview (Resource Sheet #8)
- Imagine a School Without Bullying (Resource Sheet #9)
- Barbara Coloroso Pamphlet entitled “the bully, the bullied, the bystander” (Resource Sheets #10 & #11)
- What Parents Can Do to Support Their Children (Resource Sheets #12 & #13)
- Resources for Parents (Resource Sheet #14 & #15)
- Internet Resources for Parents (Resource Sheet #16)

A second meeting with the Parent Council may be held when the school plan has been developed (see Step 7 for more information). A School Climate Committee representative may also choose to attend regular meetings with the Parent Council at strategic points during the development or implementation of the school plan. Alternatively, schools may choose to report regularly to parents through the school newsletter.

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING THE PARENT COUNCIL MEETING

Before the meeting:

- Determine who will be responsible for facilitating the meeting
- Arrange the logistics for the meeting (e.g., time and place, childcare, refreshments, copies of the support materials)
- Arrange for translators where required
- If possible, set up a display of relevant resources on the topic (see Section 6: Resources).



During the meeting (see draft agenda page 48):

NOTE:

Bullying is an emotional topic and discussion may rekindle parents' own memories of bullying at school. Discussions will also raise sensitive issues concerning people's experience with child abuse and family violence. Adults/parents/ staff should be aware of board protocols and legal responsibility of staff and members of the broader community to report children in need of protection.

- Communicate the purpose of the meeting: to discuss bullying in general terms and explore how the home and school can work together to address this problem.
- Set the climate or ground rules at the outset of the meeting by reviewing the purpose. Explain that neither specific bullying incidents nor the individuals involved will be discussed.
- Ask parents to respect the need for confidentiality in their discussions and avoid references to specific situations or children.
- Talk briefly about why the school has decided to initiate a bullying prevention initiative. You may wish to begin by talking about bullying in a larger context (e.g. the community, the workplace), then discussing bullying as it pertains to the school. One strategy for encouraging reflection and discussion is to ask parents, "How did you first learn about bullying?".
- Have parents complete the Bullying Quiz (Resource Sheet #5) and discuss the answers (Resource Sheets #6 & #7). You may also choose to distribute the introductory information contained in the section "The Nature of Bullying" (pages 10 to 21)
- Outline the steps the school will undertake to address bullying prevention and discuss how parents can be involved (Resource Sheet #8).
- Ask parents for their ideas concerning how the school can respond to bullying problems (Resource Sheet #9). Let parents know how this information will be used and ask how they want the school to report back to parents on the school plan.
- Describe the lesson plans that will be used. Tell parents that, as part of the classroom lessons, you would like to have students in grades 2 to 8 complete a brief survey about their experiences with bullying at school.
- Listen to parents' concerns about their children being bullied.
- Discuss some of the measures parents themselves can undertake with their children to counteract bullying (see parent handouts- Resource Sheets #10 through #16).



PROMOTING INCLUSIVENESS IN PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Waterloo Region has a large variety of languages spoken and cultures practised amongst its citizens. **It is important that schools know how to support the involvement of parents whose first language is not English.**

Some ways that inclusiveness can be facilitated include:

- marking communications with a note that denotes the importance of the document and asking that someone translate it for the parents
- engaging the services of translators from the local multicultural centre
- using a consistent logo which identifies the communication as having something to do with bullying prevention
- engaging the services of settlement workers to assist the parent in participating
- employing the strategies and resources that each board of education has provided to promote inclusiveness. For specific information, contact the consultant for your board of education that works with this issue.

Waterloo Catholic District School Board

Faith Formation, Religion,
Family Life and Human Sexuality,
Equity, Race Relations and Ethnocultural Consultant
Telephone: (519) 578-3660
Fax: (519) 578-9967

Waterloo Region District School Board

English as a Second Language Consultant
Telephone: (519) 570-0003
Fax: (519) 742-1364



INVOLVING PARENTS AT LARGE

In addition to consultation with the Parent Council, schools wanting an increased level of parent involvement in the development of the school plan may choose to implement any of the following strategies:

- Have one or more parent representatives on the school climate committee
- Survey parents for their concerns about bullying issues and their ideas for the school plan
- Organize a study group or series of meetings at which interested parents and school staff can discuss relevant articles, books, or videos on various aspects of bullying
- Encourage informal discussion on bullying issues between classroom teachers and parents
- Invite parents to attend the school assembly that launches the plan
- Encourage parents to begin dialogue about bullying in other spheres of their children's lives eg. before and after school daycare programs, recreation programs, etc.



LESSONS LEARNED FROM *GOOD KID SID*

- **Parental support of the plan is vital!** School staff emphasized repeatedly that unless parents reinforce the message that the school is promoting, lasting change is very difficult to make when it comes to bullying.
- Parental involvement on the School Climate Committee may not happen right away, depending on the school and the competing interests that parents may have e.g. having to work two jobs to make ends meet. However, with continued efforts to keep parents informed of the progress of the initiative, and continued invitations to participate, parents may eventually become able to participate. In one *Good Kid Sid* school, parents did not come on board until Year 3, but when they did, they did awesome work!



PARENT COMMITTEE MEETING: DRAFT AGENDA (approximate time: 1.5 hours)	
Welcome and Introduction (5 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ review purpose of meeting▪ set climate or ground rules▪ talk about why the school is initiating bullying prevention
The Problem of Bullying (40 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ distribute and complete “Bullying Quiz”▪ discuss answers to each question (For a more complete discussion of the questions and answers, refer to the section “Nature of Bullying” earlier in this resource).
A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention (5 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ display overhead, “An Overview of a School climate Approach to Bullying Prevention”▪ outline each step of the process
Developing the School Plan (20 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ display overhead or poster “Imagine a School Without Bullying” and discuss in large or small groups▪ record parents’ ideas as input for the development of a school statement for bullying prevention (see Step 4); alternatively, conduct a carousel brainstorm on flip chart paper (one sheet each for role of parents, school staff, and students)
Parent Involvement (15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ explain how ideas gathered at this meeting will be used▪ discuss with parents how they can continue to be involved▪ ask for ideas on how to communicate the plan to all parents▪ distribute and comment on handout “What Parents Can Do to Support Their Children”▪ distribute handout “Resources for Parents”
Conclusion (5 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ thank parents for attending▪ check for questions



Resource Sheets

The Bullying Quiz

Circle the word for each statement to tell us if you think it is either *true* or *false*.

- | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Bullying is just another word for aggressive behaviour. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 2. Bullying is just “kids being kids”. They don’t mean to hurt anyone. They’re just trying to work out their anger or conflict. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 3. Using mean words is the most common form of bullying. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 4. Bullying is really only a problem for the child being targeted, not for the rest of the students at school. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 5. If bullying or being bullied is a pattern of behaviour that occurs again and again in a child’s life, it can have severe consequences, even into adulthood. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 6. Children who are bullied are not to be blamed for becoming a target. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 7. Kids are powerless to stop bullying amongst their peers. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 8. Adults can play only a limited role in preventing bullying. It is up to the children to change. | TRUE | FALSE |

Answers to the Bullying Quiz

1. “Bullying is just another word for aggressive behaviour.” ----- FALSE

“A person is being bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time to negative actions [read aggressive behaviours] on the part of one or more other persons (Olweus, 1991). The four hallmarks of bullying behaviour are: an imbalance of power between the parties; the intent to harm the target; distress in the child who is targeted; and frequent, repeated attacks (Pepler and Craig, 1998).

2. “Bullying is just “kids being kids”. They don’t mean to hurt anyone. They’re just trying to work out their anger and their conflicts.” ----- FALSE

Although common, bullying is not a normal part of childhood: it is an intentional act of violence. Bullying is learned behaviour and it can be unlearned. “Bullying is not about anger. It’s not even about conflict. It’s about contempt---a powerful feeling of dislike toward somebody considered to be worthless, inferior, or undeserving of respect.” (Coloroso, 2002).

3. “Using mean words is the most common form of bullying.” ----- TRUE

Verbal aggression and emotional alienation are by far the most common forms of bullying, however physical bullying is the most visible and direct form of bullying and is therefore more likely to be seen by others. For boys, who tend to value physical dominance, power and status, bullying is more likely to take physical, cognitive and social forms e.g. kicking, hitting, threatening, making dares, and derogatory remarks. Girls generally value relationships and their bullying behaviours are more likely to involve acts of emotional alienation like spreading rumours, withdrawing friendship, and ignoring (Bosacki and Marini, 2002).

4. “Bullying is really only a problem for the child being targeted, not for the rest of the students at school.” ----- FALSE

When bullying is not named and stopped by adults, children tend to think that aggression used to gain power is acceptable and unpreventable. It creates a culture of fear in the school where, if one doesn’t go along with the children who bully, then one fears becoming a target him/herself. Children who live in fear are much less concerned with learning school curriculum than they are concerned with avoiding becoming a target, therefore academic learning for all children can be adversely affected.

5. “If bullying or being bullied is a pattern of behaviour that occurs again and again in a child’s life, it can have severe consequences, even into adulthood.” ----- TRUE

Children for whom bullying is a fixed part of their behaviour are more likely to: have academic problems and drop out of school; be aggressive, including taking part in sexual harassment and dating aggression; become delinquent or involved with gangs; abuse substances; develop anxiety or conduct disorders (Pepler and Craig, 2003) and have criminal charges laid against them (Olweus, 1993). Children who have been bullied repeatedly, depending on the frequency, severity, pervasiveness and chronicity of the bullying, may develop very negative outcomes: academic problems, school drop out, mental and physical health problems e.g. anxiety, self isolation; they may become easily victimized or may develop bullying behaviours themselves. (Pepler and Craig, 2003). Some children go on to commit “bullicide” (suicide after being bullied) or homicide against those who bullied them (Coloroso, 2002).

6. “Children who are bullied are not to be blamed for being a target.” ----- TRUE

No child ever deserves to be bullied. There may be children who are different in some way from their peers. They may as yet not understand social cues e.g. how to get someone’s attention in a positive manner, they may be hyperactive, aggressive or very sensitive, but these behaviours in no way excuse the disrespect and abuse that bullying promotes. Children who misbehave (including those who bully) need to have their thinking changed, and then their behaviour; they need to take responsibility for their actions, but they do not deserve to be punished and demeaned by others.

7. “Adults can play only a limited role in stopping and preventing bullying. It is up to the kids to change.” ----- FALSE

Adult awareness of the extent of bullying and adult involvement in counteracting bullying problems are key to stopping and preventing bullying (Olweus, 1993). Because bullying involves a power imbalance between the child who is bullying and the target, adult intervention is needed to rebalance the power in the social setting so that all children are safe.

8. “Kids are powerless to stop bullying among their peers.” ----- FALSE

“One of the most significant influences in bullying is the peer group. Children often come to understand that they can acquire power by bullying others and that these actions attract a lot of peer attention. In this way, children are lured into being aggressive. At other times, children assess the costs and risks of taking sides. The risk of siding with the target and becoming the next target is all too salient for children. Often children will join in bullying to protect themselves or they will join with others who are bullying to be accepted as “one of the group”. It is important the children be taught to recognize peer pressure and how it influences bullying behaviour. Recognition, coupled with assertiveness skills training are the first tools needed to begin to stand up to this pressure” (edited from Pepler and Craig, 2003, pg.7).

An Overview of a School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention

Components in the development of a school-wide bullying prevention plan:

- Step 1:** Engage Commitment of School Staff
- Step 2:** Establish a School Climate Committee
- Step 3:** Involve Parents
- Step 4:** Involve Students
- Step 5:** Create and/or Amend a School Statement for a Respectful School Environment
- Step 6:** Build a Supervision Plan
- Step 7:** Construct a School Climate Enhancement Plan
- Step 8:** Develop a Response Plan
- Step 9:** Promote and Implement the School Plan
- Step 10:** Monitor and Reassess the School Plan

Address Bullying Prevention Through Classroom Lessons

Module A: Defining Bullying

Module B: The School Plan

Module C: Dealing with Bullying



Imagine... A School Without Bullying...



What Are the Qualities of a School Without Bullying?

Consider the role of:

- parents
- school staff
- students



the bully

Bullies come in all shapes and sizes. Some are big; some are small; some bright and some not so bright; some attractive and some not so attractive; some popular and some disliked by almost everybody.

Bullying is a conscious, willful and deliberate hostile activity, intended to harm.

The Four Markers of Bullying

1. An imbalance of power
2. Intent to harm
3. Threat of further aggression
4. When bullying escalates unabated—terror

Bullying is not about anger, or even about conflict. It's about contempt—a powerful feeling of dislike toward someone considered to be worthless, inferior or undeserving of respect. Contempt comes with three apparent psychological advantages that allow kids to harm others without feeling empathy, compassion or shame. These are:

1. A sense of entitlement—the right to control, dominate, subjugate, and abuse another human being
2. An intolerance toward difference
3. A liberty to exclude—to bar, isolate, and segregate a person deemed not worthy of respect or care

Seven Steps to Stop Bullying

1. Discipline (including the three Rs: restitution, resolution, reconciliation)
2. Create opportunities to "do good"
3. Nurture empathy
4. Teach friendship skills
5. Closely monitor TV viewing, video games and computer activities
6. Engage in more constructive, entertaining, energizing activities
7. Teach ways to "will good"

the bullied

The one thing that all kids who are bullied have in common is that a bully or a bunch of bullies has targeted them. Each one was singled out to be the object of scorn, and thus the recipient of bullying, merely because he or she was different in some way.

The Warning Signs

1. Shows an abrupt lack of interest in school, or refuses to go to school
2. Takes an unusual route to school
3. Suffers drop in grades
4. Withdraws from family and school activities
5. Is hungry after school
6. Steals money from home
7. Makes a beeline to the bathroom when arriving home
8. Is sad, sullen, angry, or scared after receiving a phone call or email
9. Does something out of character
10. Has torn or missing clothing
11. Uses derogatory or demeaning language when talking about peers
12. Stops talking about peers and everyday activities
13. Has physical injuries not consistent with explanation
14. Has stomachaches, headaches, panic attacks, is unable to sleep, sleeps too much, is exhausted
15. Plays alone, or prefers to hang with adults

Why Kids Don't Tell

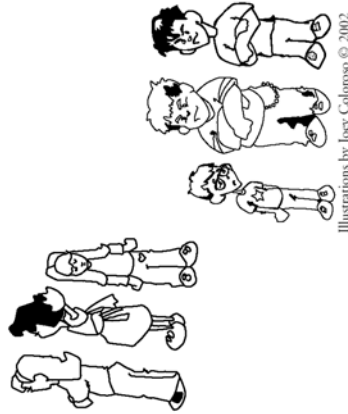
1. They are ashamed of being bullied
2. They are afraid of retaliation
3. They don't think anyone can help them
4. They don't think anyone will help them
5. They've bought into the lie that bullying is a necessary part of growing up
6. They might believe that adults are part of the lie—they bully too
7. They have learned that "ratting" on a peer is bad, not cool

the bystander

Bystanders are the third group of players in this tragedy. They are the supporting cast who aid and abet the bully, through acts of omission and commission. They stand idly by or look away, or they can actively encourage the bully or join in and become one of a bunch of bullies. Injustice overlooked or ignored becomes a contagion that infects even those who thought they could turn away.

Standing Up and Speaking Out

Bullying is challenged when the majority stands up against the cruel acts of the minority. Establishing new norms, enforcing playground rules, and increasing supervision are policy decisions that can help reduce the incidents of bullying. Since much of the bullying goes on "under the radar of adults," a potent force is kids themselves showing bullies that they will not be looked up to, nor will their cruel behavior be condoned or tolerated. Kids need not be bystanders. They can become active witnesses, standing up for their peers, speaking out against injustices, and taking responsibility for what happened among themselves.



Excerpts from *the bully, the bullied, and the bystander*; Barbara Coloroso © 2002
www.kidsareworthit.com kids are worth it, inc.
800.729.1588 • fax 303.972.1204

teasing/taunting

Teasing

1. Allows the teaser and person teased to swap roles.
2. Isn't intended to hurt the other person.
3. Maintains the basic dignity of everyone involved.
4. Pokes fun in a lighthearted, clever, and benign way.
5. Is meant to get both parties to laugh.
6. Is only a small part of the activities shared by kids who have something in common.
7. Is innocent in motive.
8. Is discontinued when person teased becomes upset or objects to the teasing.

Taunting

1. Is based on an imbalance of power and is one-sided: the bully taunts, the bullied kid is taunted.
2. Is intended to harm.
3. Involves humiliating, cruel, demeaning, or bigoted comments thinly disguised as jokes.
4. Includes laughter directed *at* the target, not *with* the target.
5. Is meant to diminish the sense of self-worth of the target.
6. Induces fear of further taunting or can be a prelude to physical bullying.
7. Is sinister in motive.
8. Continues especially when targeted kid becomes distressed or objects to the taunt.

four most powerful antidotes to bullying

Strong sense of self; being a friend, having at least one good friend who is there for you through thick and thin, and being able to successfully get into a group—and get out when it does not serve you well.

if your child is bullied

Dont's

1. Don't minimize, rationalize, or explain away the bully's behavior.
2. Don't rush in to solve the problem for your child.
3. Don't tell your child to avoid the bully.
4. Don't tell your child to fight back.
5. Don't confront the bully or the bully's parents alone.

Do's

1. I hear you; I am here for you; I believe you; you are not alone in this.
2. It is not your fault.
3. There are things you can do.
4. Report the bullying to school personnel.

how to report

1. Arrange a meeting for you and your child with the appropriate person at the school.
2. Bring to the meeting the facts in writing—the date, time, place, kids involved, and the specifics of the incidents—and the impact the bullying has had on your child as well as what your child has done to try to stop the bullying that didn't work.
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 can do to avoid being bullied and to stand up to any future bullying, and whom she can go to for help.
4. Find out what procedures the bully will be going through and what kind of support the school is expecting from the parents of the bully.
5. If you feel the problem is not being adequately addressed by the school, know that you can express your concerns and let the teacher and/or administrator know that you will take the next step to the school district board office and if necessary—especially in the cases of serious abuse and racist or sexist bullying—to the police.

caring schools

1. Gather information about bullying at school directly from students.
2. Establish clear schoolwide and classroom rules about bullying.
3. Train all adults in the school to respond sensitively and consistently to bullying.
4. Provide adequate adult supervision, particularly in less structured areas, such as on the playground and in the lunchroom.
5. Improve parental awareness of and involvement in working on the problem.

re-writing the script

The bully, the bullied, the bystander—the interactions involved in such role-playing, though commonplace in our culture, are not healthy, not normal, certainly not necessary, and in fact are devastating to the children playing them. We as parents and educators can rewrite the script and create for our children alternative, healthier roles that require no pretense and no violence. With care and commitment, we can rechannel the behaviors of the bully into positive leadership activities; acknowledge the nonaggressive behaviors of the bullied child as strengths that can be developed and are honored; and transform the role of the bystander into that of a witness, someone willing to stand up, speak out, and act against injustice. A daunting task, but a necessary one.



Illustrations by Joey Coloroso © 2002

Excerpts from *the bully, the bullied, and the bystander*, Barbara Coloroso © 2002
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What Parents Can Do About Bullying with Their Children

Children learn how to get along by watching adults.

- Model positive ways of getting along with others e.g. show empathy for others, show how to manage angry feelings without hurting others, show acceptance of others, show your children how you cope with pressure from your peers, etc.
- Watch what your child is watching on television. Limit TV programs that show disrespectful and aggressive behaviour.
- Help your child find ways to express anger that do not involve hurting others' feelings or bodies. When you get angry, use it as a chance to model how to handle anger without hurting others and talk to your child about the way you do this e.g. count to ten, breathe deeply, walk away, etc.

Children learn by doing.

- Help your child develop social skills by allowing them lots of opportunities to talk and play and work with other children. For young children, make sure they are in the presence of adults who can watch them and help them if needed.
- Help your child think of and practise words to use when peers are using words that hurt.
- Teach your child how to stick up for herself or himself through assertive, not aggressive, behaviour. (e.g. "If you're going to keep that up, you won't be allowed to play here anymore.")
- Encourage and expand your child's interests and abilities.
- Involve your child in group activities that will improve her or his social skills. Invite your child's friends to your home and have activities for them to do. **Boredom can breed bullying.**
- Discuss with your child examples of bullying that he or she notices on television, in video games, or in the neighbourhood. Help your child understand how bullying affects everyone.
- Teach your child problem-solving skills. Say something positive to your child when he or she follows through.
- Help your child understand the value of accepting and celebrating individual differences.

What Parents Can Do About Bullying **With Their Children**

Children need adults.

- Ask your child how he or she gets along with friends and peers.
- Encourage your child to tell you or another trusted adult if she or he is bullied or sees another child being bullied.
- Keep lines of communication open with your child. Encourage your child to always let you know where and with whom he or she will be. Get to know your child's friends.
- Take action to stop bullying incidents if you see or are told about them. Make it clear to all the children involved that bullying will not be allowed. Make sure that those being bullied are safe.
- Inform school staff if your child tells you about bullying happening at school.
- Learn more about the topic of bullying and share your knowledge with your child. There is much information for parents and children on bullying. (See "Selected Resources for Parents" sheet) and check your local library or the internet.
- Talk with other parents about bullying and what to do in order to keep everyone's children safe.
- Get involved in bullying-prevention efforts at your child's school.
- Foster your child's self-esteem. A strong sense of self-worth can help a child stand up to peer pressure or children that bully.
- Be alert to signs that your child is being bullied or may be bullying others: torn clothing, mysterious bruises, falling behind in school work, returning home to use the washroom, changes in behaviour (e.g. angry outbursts, fighting, behaviour problems at school and in the neighbourhood, lack of friends). Get help for your child. Talk with the teacher or principal.
- Talk with your child about the school's discipline policy and the school plan for bullying prevention. Talk to your child about what she or he is learning in school about bullying.

Resources for Parents

THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE RESOURCES ON THIS LIST DOES NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE OFFICIAL POSITION OR POLICIES
OF THE WATERLOO REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD, THE WATERLOO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OR
REGION OF WATERLOO PUBLIC HEALTH.

Written Resources

Coloroso, B. (2002). The Bully, The Bullied and the Bystander. Toronto: HarperCollins.
Discusses the environmental context in which bullying may be allowed to thrive and may even be rewarded. Using lots of real examples and practical advice, it provides children, parents, teachers, principals and others who work with children the ways and the means to address and prevent bullying behaviour, both between individuals and in the broader environment.

Fried, S. & Fried, P. (1996). Bullies and Victims: Helping Your Child Through the Schoolyard Battlefield New York: M. Evans and Company.
Aimed at helping parents, teachers, and counsellors understand the dynamics and act effectively when children are bullying or being bullied; gives practical steps to help children prevent and solve the problem.

McNamara, B. & McNamara, F. (1997). Keys to Dealing with Bullies. New York: Barrons Educational Series.
Profiles children who bully and children who are bullied, describes patterns, underlying causes and longterm effects of bullying. Offers specific suggestions for dealing with bullying.

Pearce, J. (1989). Fighting, Teasing and Bullying: Effective Ways to Help Your Child to Cope with Aggressive Behaviour. London: HarperCollins Publishers.
Aimed at parents, this book makes suggestions for activities parents can do with their children to prepare them to deal with bullying and teasing.

Sheridan, S. (1995). The Tough Kid Social Skills Book. Colorado: Sopris West.
Practical ideas and resources for improving social skills.

Simmons, R. (2002). Odd Girl Out-The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls. New York: Harcourt, Inc.
Raises adult awareness of the types of bullying that girls are involved with, either directly or indirectly.

Stones, R. (1993). Don't Pick on Me. Markham, Ontario: Pembroke Publishers.
A thorough look at the issue of bullying. It is designed to provide young people with information and strategies for coping with and preventing bullying. The book offers specific games and strategies that can be used to boost the self esteem of those being bullied.

Zarzour, K. (1994). Battling the Schoolyard Bully: How to Raise an Assertive Child in an Aggressive World . Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.

A good overview with practical tips and ideas for parents and teachers. Offers information about stopping the bully/victim cycle, preventing bullying and victimization, and encouraging assertive behaviour.

Internet Resources **for Parents**

London Family Court Clinic

London, Ontario, CAN

This page of the LFCC site gives very helpful, practical information about bullying to parents and teachers. It is an excerpt from A.S.A.P., A School-based Anti-Violence Program.

<http://www.lfcc.on.ca/bully.htm>

Bully B'ware

Coquitlam, BC, CAN

Bully Beware website offers general information, tips & strategies, stories about bullying, media articles, materials for sale, and workshops.

<http://www.bullybeware.com/>

Live Violence Free

BC, CAN

Put out by the British Columbia Ministry of Education, this site outlines programs, and gives helpful tips to parents for what to do if their student is bullied, or is bullying others. Also gives facts about bullying, a chart of progressive bullying behaviours, and a violence continuum chart.

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/live_vf/

What Makes Kids Care?

Washington, DC, USA

An article from the American Psychological Association about promoting caring and altruism in children, mainly geared towards parents.

<http://www.apa.org/pubinfo/altruism.html>

Step 3 Action Checklist



STEP 3: INVOLVE PARENTS

TASKS TO BE COMPLETED FOR THE PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PARENTS' MEETING:

- ☐ confirm date, time, location
- ☐ arrange logistics (childcare, refreshments, translators, etc.)
- ☐ confirm agenda
- ☐ prepare handouts and overheads
- ☐ prepare resources/displays
- ☐ determine meeting facilitator
- ☐ determine meeting recorder

OTHER TASKS:

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Step 4: Involve Students



Grade 6 Student
Manchester Public School



Grade 4 Student
St. Joseph School



**Imagine... A School Without Bullying:
A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention**



Step 4



INVOLVE STUDENTS

STEP 4 INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING PROCESSES:

- determining the role students will play in the development of the school plan
- outlining strategies for involving students in the school climate approach to bullying prevention

Students need opportunities to contribute to the well-being and vitality of their school community. Given opportunities, children will make a significant contribution to the development of a school climate that supports bullying prevention and fosters respect. For this to happen, students need to be offered specific activities—both within and outside the classroom—connecting them to the school-wide plan in ways that benefit the wider community.

All students in the school can be powerful agents in changing attitudes and actions of their peers. While the majority of children do not bully others, they often inadvertently encourage bullying as onlookers. In addition, the school climate approach to bullying prevention offers an opportunity for students who do engage in bullying to learn and practise pro-social behaviours. Together, all students can assist in the creation of a school environment where all students have the right to safety and security.

By involving students as full partners in the school climate approach, the committee can mobilize the student population in the creation of a positive peer culture where helpfulness, friendliness, and positive leadership roles are recognized. Consider the following strategies for involving students:

- Include students as part of the School Climate Committee. Student involvement on the committee provides a mechanism for ensuring that the school plan will be effective and relevant for students.



- ▶ Develop a Student Bullying Prevention Committee. A student committee can meet occasionally to provide feedback to the School Climate Committee on the development and the implementation of the school plan. Alternatively, co-ordinate with existing student groups (e.g., student council) for their input.
- ▶ Involve students in promoting the school statement and plan. (see Step 9: Promote and Implement the School Plan). The launch assembly and possible subsequent “booster assemblies” are a natural vehicle for including students. Their contributions to the assemblies will help ensure that the message is communicated to the student body in a meaningful way.
- ▶ Conduct a poster contest during the development or implementation of the school plan.
- ▶ Have students make periodic anti-bullying announcements as part of routine announcements e.g. every Tuesday morning
- ▶ Highlight student activities that are contributing to a safe school e.g. peer mediators, playground assistants, learning buddies, etc. This can be done on announcements, in newsletters or at assemblies.
- ▶ Invite students to speak at parent meetings. Student participation at parent meetings could address topics such as why they think bullying prevention is important, how they can help keep the school a safe environment, or what they have learned through the lesson plans.
- ▶ Provide for student involvement through classroom lessons. The lesson plans included later in this resource provide opportunities for students to give feedback to the school plan. Specific lessons that invite student input include:
 - a survey activity for students in grades 2-8 to identify the incidence of bullying at the school (Module A)
 - an opportunity for students to examine the school plan for bullying prevention (Module B)

For more information on involving students in developing and implementing the school-wide plan, refer to the sections,



“Step 9: Promote and Implement the School Plan,” and “Address Bullying Prevention through Classroom Lessons,” later in this resource. The lesson plans are organized to provide students with introductory education about bullying prior to the launch of the bullying-prevention plan at the school assembly. The school climate committee members should familiarize themselves with the lesson plan structure, and co-ordinate timelines for delivering the classroom lessons as outlined on page 25).



LESSONS LEARNED FROM *GOOD KID SID*

- ▶ Students were some of the best promoters of the initiative. Their creativity was endless when it came to doing artwork and assemblies about their school’s approach to bullying---they created rap songs, skits, vignettes, lip synched and signed to relevant music and had fun doing it (very important!)
- ▶ It was very helpful when adults consistently used common language to describe bullying eg. a bullying behaviour is when someone does something to hurt someone not by accident but on purpose and it is a bullying situation when someone does hurtful things to someone again and again, on purpose. Once students learned the language and the rules around bullying, and had some practice, they were well able to apply their learning. Teachers remarked that they heard students on the playground correctly labelling behaviour and beginning to be assertive in dealing with each others’ behaviour, as well as working to problem solve some situations and supporting children who had been bullied.
- ▶ In older grades, after some instruction, students were able to plan and facilitate classroom meetings with minimal guidance from the classroom teacher.
- ▶ Eventually, students came to trust and expect that if they told a teacher about a bullying situation, something would be done to stop it. Children that transferred from one school to another carried those expectations with them and demanded that action be taken on bullying behaviour at their new school.

Step 4 Action Checklist



STEP 4: INVOLVE STUDENTS

- ☐ Determine the role students will play in the development of the school plan. _____

- ☐ Outline strategies for involving students in the School Climate Approach for Bullying Prevention name the person responsible for implementing that strategy.

- ☐ Become familiar with the structure of the classroom lessons.

Step 5: **Create and/or Amend a School Statement for a Respectful School Environment**



Grade 1 Student
Alpine Public School



Grade 5 Student
Cedarbrae Public School



Imagine... A School Without Bullying:
A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention

Step 5



CREATE AND/OR AMEND A SCHOOL STATEMENT FOR A RESPECTFUL SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

STEP 5 INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING PROCESSES:

- determining the form the statement will take
- inviting staff, student and parent input into creating the school statement
- incorporating various other stakeholders' contributions to create the school statement
- creating a promotion plan for the school statement

A SCHOOL STATEMENT:

- describes a school that doesn't tolerate bullying or other disrespectful behaviour
- conveys the school's commitment to bullying prevention

"At Smith Elementary we are committed to providing an environment free of bullying behaviour. We work together to:

- Resolve conflict peacefully
- Include others in all activities
- Respect differences
- Support each other"

The school statement defines common ground among staff, parents, and students, and communicates a unified vision of a school that recognizes, responds to and tries to prevent bullying. The vision is feasible and attainable, and is connected to the deeper values of justice, peace, respect, inclusiveness, safety, caring and equity.

The school statement energizes partners to participate in the plan. In addition, the school statement can guide the working group as they continue to develop the school's bullying-prevention plan. The working group should continually ask themselves if the plan they are constructing is consistent with the vision they portrayed in the school statement.

Statements have the most power when they are stated in simple terms so that most people can see and recall them at any time. A strong statement that includes everyone's ideas takes time to refine and select. The best phrases are "home grown" and convey a message that everyone understands.

The school statement can take many forms. It can be a separate statement or motto outlining the school's commitment to bullying prevention, or can be incorporated into an existing school Mission



A Mission Statement is an overall description of the school's educational philosophy.

Statement, Code of Conduct, or Charter of Respect. Schools that already have a code, charter, or mission in place may choose to begin by examining these statements to determine whether or not they sufficiently address the school's vision for bullying prevention.

CREATING THE SCHOOL STATEMENT

A Code of Conduct is a description of the school's behavioural expectations.

“School Code of Conduct

Cooperation:

- We listen to others' opinions.
- We follow instructions given by staff members and volunteers.
- We follow school rules.

Consideration:

- We care about others' feelings.
- We think before we act.
- We respect school rules.

Courtesy:

- We greet one another.
- We thank people for helping us.
- We are polite to each other.”

Adapted from the Code of Conduct, Hastings Community School, School District #39 (Vancouver).

Schools that choose to create a separate school statement on bullying prevention may consider the following process for involving staff, students, and parents in designing the statement.

RECEIVE STAFF INPUT

Either in staff training or at a full staff meeting, spend some time considering how the school may wish to convey its commitment to bullying prevention. The working group may choose to create a new statement; amend an existing Mission, Code of Conduct, or Charter of Respect; or create a slogan, motto, flag, or banner. Regardless of the approach chosen, it will be worthwhile to spend some time discussing the following questions:

- What is our vision for a school without bullying?
- What are the roles of staff, students, and parents in a school without bullying?
- What vision do our students have for a school without bullying?
- What vision do parents have for a school without bullying?
- What are the qualities of a school without bullying?
- How can we state in a positive way what it is we wish to achieve at the end of this process?

The feedback received from staff will form the basis of the school statement. Record the feedback and ask staff to provide suggestions as to how this information could best be conveyed in a school statement.



A Charter of Respect is a purpose statement outlining the school's commitment to creating a culture of trust and respect. It can include a vision statement, and descriptions of how school members will act respectfully.

A Slogan or Motto is a simple, easy-to-remember, "catchy" phrase to communicate the school's commitment to bullying prevention. Examples of bullying prevention slogans/ mottoes: "Respect is practised here!" "Welcome to the respect zone." "Be a Buddy--Not a Bully!" (Alpine Public School, Kitchener)

RECEIVE STUDENT INPUT

Student contributions to the school statement can be garnered through the student bullying-prevention committee, the student council, from student representatives on the school climate committee, or in selected classrooms. It is suggested that a representative group of students spend some time brainstorming their vision for a school without bullying. Consider using questions such as the following to solicit student input:

- What would a school without bullying look like?
- What do the students do in a school without bullying?
- What do the staff do in a school without bullying?
- What do the parents do in a school without bullying?

In addition, Module B in the classroom lessons provides opportunities for students to brainstorm ideas about what a school without bullying would look like. Although this activity may take place after the school statement has been constructed, this information can be considered within Step 10 when the plan is reassessed. This exercise also creates an opportunity for the students to strengthen their personal commitment to creating a school climate that prevents bullying.

RECEIVE PARENTAL INPUT

Step 2: Involve Parents (page 43) outlines a process for receiving contributions to the school statement at a parents' meeting. The working group should lead this process and receive the feedback.

INCORPORATE CONTRIBUTIONS

Once the above steps have been completed, it is the responsibility of the working group to:

- gather feedback
- highlight and discuss key themes
- decide on a format for the school statement
- draft the statement.



A Flag or Banner communicates the school's commitment to bullying prevention in graphic or symbolic form.

LIVING THE SCHOOL STATEMENT

For the school statement to have meaning, it must be more than just words: it should be the starting point for putting the school's bullying prevention plan into action. In some schools, the school statement is reviewed at the start of each school year as part of an opening ceremony, and forms a personal commitment to maintain a safe and respectful community for the protection of all school members. Some schools communicate the school's statement through materials issued by the school, such as letterheads, buttons, and pencils. The working group should determine how the school statement will be communicated and personalized for all members of the school community.



LESSONS LEARNED FROM *GOOD KID SID*

► The *Good Kid Sid* Rules (see pg. 75), though not developed individually by every school, were used in the pilot project instead of a school statement. In some schools they were thoroughly promoted throughout the school eg. in every classroom, in the gym, in the hallways, on bulletin boards etc. and could be referred to by staff and students to remind people of expected behaviour. Eventually in some schools, students, parents and staff knew them by heart. Parents were informed of the rules in varying ways---through pamphlets, newsletters, in the school planner or at kindergarten registration. Some schools required the parents to sign a form saying they would support the application of the *Good Kid Sid* rules---those parents were well aware of the rules.



*St. George's School
Ottawa-Carleton District School Board*

No Bullying Strategy Statement

We recognize violence as any word, look, sign or act that inflicts or threatens to inflict physical or emotional injury or discomfort upon another person's body, feelings or possessions. We also recognize bullying as a type of violence that occurs when a student intentionally, repeatedly and over time inflicts or threatens to inflict injury or discomfort on another student.

TO MAKE OUR SCHOOL VIOLENCE-FREE AND SAFE FROM BULLYING, WE PLEDGE TO:

1. tolerate no bullying in our school
2. intervene in bullying behaviours and strictly enforce rules against bullying
3. empower students to report bullying behaviour and to treat one another with respect

SAMPLE



Letter To Home

ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL GOOD KID SID BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM

At St. Joseph's Catholic School we believe every student has the right to be safe. **BULLYING VIOLATES THIS RIGHT!** We need **EVERYONE'S** help to continue to **STOP** bullying.

PARENTS' ROLE:

Parents play an important role in counteracting bully/victim problems. By clearly communicating that bullying is not acceptable behaviour, school and home will support and mutually strengthen one another. Parents and teachers will work together to help all children learn appropriate positive social behaviours.

GOOD KID SID RULES:

- 1. We will not bully other students.**
- 2. We will try to help students who are bullied.**
- 3. We will make it a point to include all students.**
- 4. When we know somebody is being bullied we will tell a teacher and an adult at home.**

What Does Our Program Involve?

Our bully prevention program involves the total effort of all school staff (teachers, principals, support staff, custodians, bus drivers, etc.), as well as students, parents and other members of the community to reduce bullying and other forms of violence.

The School's Efforts will include:

- identifying students who exhibit bullying behaviour and supporting those who have been bullied in order to address their individual needs
- applying consistent consequences against bullying
- promoting the GOOD KID SID Rules
- holding regular classroom meetings to discuss problems of bullying and violence with children
- increasing supervision of children at school
- rewarding children for exhibiting the GOOD KID SID Rules (Student of the Month)
- holding school-wide assemblies
- making use of videos, books and other resources on bullying

MANY OTHER CREATIVE EFFORTS WILL BE INITIATED BY THE TEACHERS AND STAFF AT OUR SCHOOL



WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is when one child or a group of children repeatedly hurt another child through words or actions. Bullying may involve physical aggression such as fighting, shoving, kicking, verbal aggression such as name calling, or more subtle acts such as socially isolating a child.

WARNING SIGNS THAT YOUR CHILD IS INVOLVED IN BULLYING OTHERS:

- taunts, threatens, kicks other children
- is hot-tempered, impulsive, has a hard time following rules
- is aggressive towards adults
- is tough, shows no sympathy towards children who are bullied
- has been involved in other antisocial activities such as vandalism or stealing

If your child shows several of these warning signs, it's possible that he or she is bullying one or more children. You may want to spend some extra time talking with your child about his or her behaviour and schedule a conference to talk about these issues with school staff.

WARNING SIGNS THAT YOUR CHILD IS BEING BULLIED:

- comes home from school with torn or dirty clothing, damaged books
- has cuts, bruises, scratches
- has few, if any, friends to play with
- seems afraid to go to school, complains of headaches, stomach pains
- doesn't sleep well, has bad dreams
- loses interest in school work
- seems sad, depressed or moody
- is anxious, has poor self-esteem
- is quiet, sensitive, passive

If your child shows several of these warning signs it's possible he or she is being bullied by other children. You may want to talk with your child to find out what is troubling him or her and schedule a conference to discuss your concerns with school staff.

SAMPLE



CONSEQUENCES OF BULLYING FOR STUDENTS AT ST. JOSEPH'S SCHOOL

1. The incident will be reported on a blue form.
2. The form will be submitted to the principal, who will in turn contact the parent/guardian.
3. All students involved in the incident will meet with the principal.
4. The student who has been involved in bullying will serve a detention and will attend a series of social skills workshops at lunch if the behaviour persists.

I have read the above information and understand the expectations of the St. Joseph School Bullying Prevention Program. I have discussed this with my child.

Date: _____

Parent's Signature:

Student's Signature:

SAMPLE



Good Kid Sid Says...

1. We will not bully other students.
2. We will try to help students who are bullied.
3. We will make it a point to include ALL students.
4. When we know somebody is being bullied, we will tell a teacher and an adult at home.

SAMPLE



Good Kid Sid



It is important that as a community we decide to do something to stop bullying from happening. Bullying has both short term and long term effects for those who are bullied, the bystanders, and even the people who bully. Even if a person is not directly involved in a bullying incident they are still affected by the events that take place.

As a community it is our duty to come together and decide to take action against bullying.

AS ADULTS...

We will...help our children build self confidence.
We will...try not to bully children ourselves when we are disciplining them.
We will...ask questions about what our children do when they are with friends.
We will...encourage our children to talk to us about what is happening in their lives.
We will...give our children praise when they cooperated with or are kind to other people.
We will...teach our children how to solve problems without using violence or aggression.

AS CHILDREN...

We will...accept others for who they are.
We will...try to help students who are being bullied.
We will...get to know about the other people around us.
We will...tell adults about any bullying that has happened.
We will...not pick on anyone because they are different from us.
We will...include everyone in the group when we are participating in an activity.

SAMPLE

Step 5 Action Checklist



STEP 5: CREATE AND/OR AMEND A SCHOOL STATEMENT FOR A RESPECTFUL SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

- ☐ Determine the form the school statement will take.

- ☐ Invite staff input: What is our vision of a school without bullying?
- ☐ Arrange for student input to school statement
- ☐ Invite Parent's contributions to the school statement.
- ☐ Discuss and incorporate all stakeholders' contributions in developing the school statement.
- ☐ Create a promotion plan for the school statement.
