

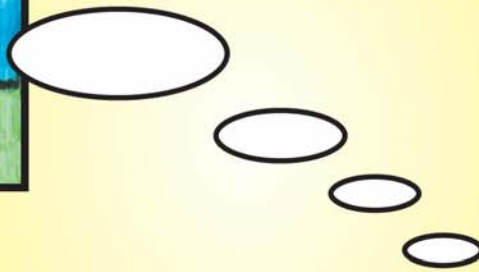
# Section 4: Respond Directly to Bullying Situations



Grade 2 Student  
Cedarbrae Public School



Grade 3 Student  
Alpine Public School



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





## RESPOND DIRECTLY TO BULLYING SITUATIONS

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This section of **Imagine...A School Without Bullying: A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention** provides a detailed description of the responses and strategies for intervening with bullying behaviour. Note that this same sequence of strategies can be found in an abbreviated form earlier in the document, as “Step 8: Develop a School-Wide Plan for Bullying Prevention”.

School personnel intervene daily in students’ inappropriate behaviours, reminding them of school rules, setting limits, and imposing consequences. However, because bullying behaviours are malicious, often covert, and repeated over time, dealing effectively with such behaviour demands a consistent school-wide response.

All school personnel should be prepared and willing to intervene immediately when they observe bullying behaviour by a student, or when a student reports that bullying is occurring. As bullying situations are complex and involve more staff members than the one who initially intervened, responsibilities are divided among two key groups, “first responders” and “second responders”.

### IS IT BULLYING?

When observing students’ social interactions, ask yourself:

- Does there appear to be an imbalance or abuse of power?
- Does one student appear to be more upset than the other(s)? If so, speak privately with the student who it appears may be bullied and ask:
  - “What was happening?”
  - “Do you usually play with these children?”
  - “Has this happened before?”
  - “What have you tried?”
  - “How are you feeling?”

**First responders** are those staff members who witness and intervene in a bullying incident or situation or those staff who first receive a report of bullying.

As first responders, they will:

- ▶ intervene quickly to stop an incident
- ▶ calmly separate the parties involved
- ▶ send the children responsible for bullying to a predetermined location (e.g., edge of the playground, office, classroom, behaviour room) and tell them there will be follow-up
  - ▶ talk with the children who have been bullied to acknowledge the incident, to gather any additional information, and make a plan for staying safe that day;
  - ▶ tell the children that another adult will meet with them to help make a plan to stay safe and avoid further bullying



- ▶ complete the discipline form and/or the appropriate sections of a bullying case report (according to what your school has in its plan) and promptly submit it to the teacher or principal. (Note that sample tracking sheets are provided pages 115 and 162).

Often, first responders may have intervened to stop a bullying incident but are unable to continue to deal with the situation. Staff members who are responsible for following through on bullying reports are referred to as **second responders**. In many cases the school administrator in consultation with a classroom teacher will play this role.

Second responders will:

- ▶ talk with each of the students involved **separately**, including those who witnessed the incident(s), to find out what happened (because bullying involves a power imbalance, interviewing all students involved at the same time will inhibit the target from being forthright about all of the information due to fear of reprisal)
- ▶ ask open-ended questions to determine the nature of the behaviour, when and where it occurred, who was involved, what the students were doing prior to the incident and, most importantly, how each student feels about what happened
- ▶ talk to other staff who have direct knowledge of the students' other behaviours
- ▶ support the student who has been bullied
- ▶ identify strategies to respond to students who witnessed the bullying
- ▶ intervene with the students who are responsible for the bullying
- ▶ complete the bullying tracking forms.

The diagram on page 141 outlines the recommended series of strategies first and second responders apply to ensure a comprehensive response to bullying incidents/situations. The techniques and strategies are described in detail on the following pages.

## **SUPPORTING THE STUDENT WHO HAS BEEN BULLIED**

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It requires courage on the part of a student who is bullied to report the bullying to an adult or to confirm a report made by someone else. Even a short-lived episode of bullying can leave a child feeling upset and fearful of possible future incidents. The child may need immediate reassurance and safety, as well as long-term support to avoid further victimization. The suggested process for supporting a student who has been bullied requires first and second responders to work together to:

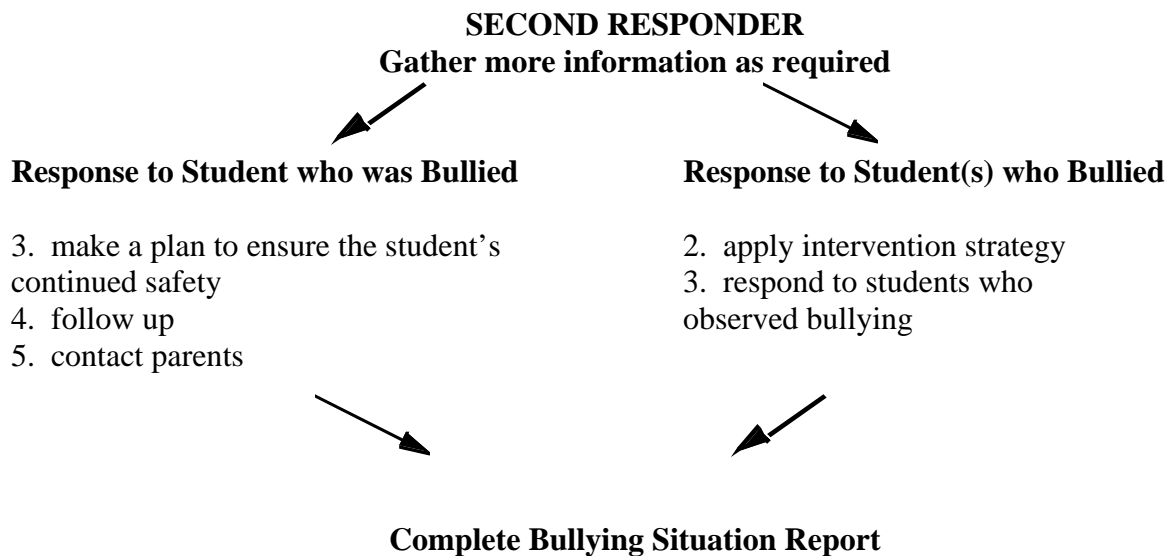
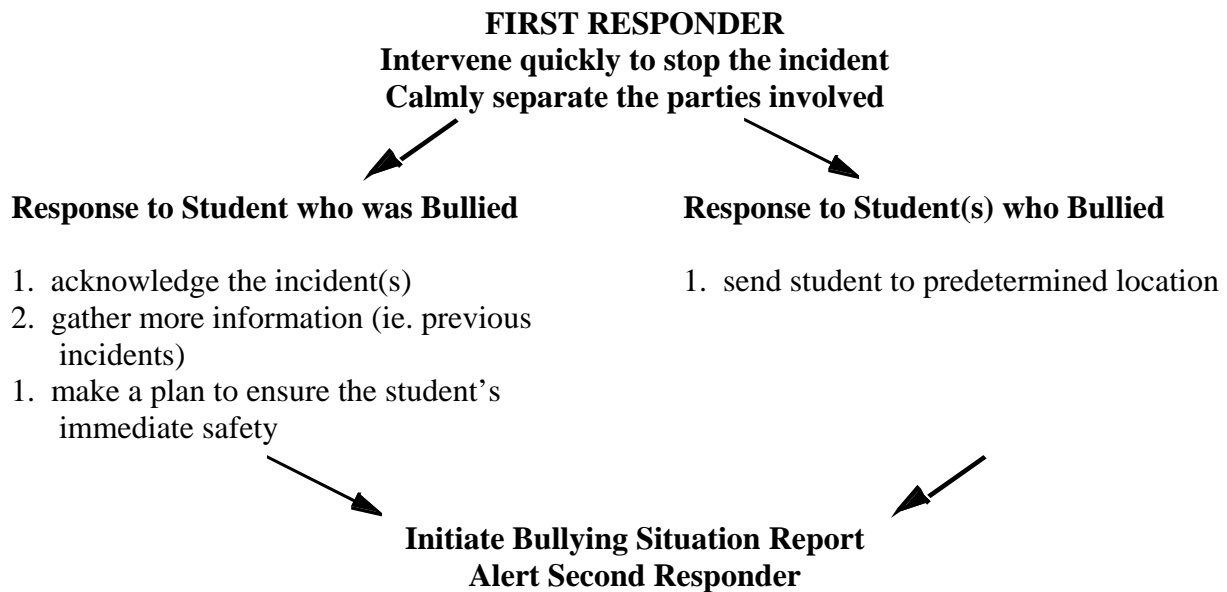
- acknowledge the incident(s)
- gather further information about the incident(s)
- make a plan for the student's safety
- follow up with the student
- consider restorative interventions.



## **RESPONDING TO BULLYING INCIDENTS/SITUATIONS**

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The following steps form a comprehensive and shared response to the student who has been the target of bullying behaviour. First responders begin steps 1 to 3, while second responders will complete steps 3 to 5.



### **1. Acknowledge the Incident**

“You were right to tell me.”

“I understand how hard it was for you to tell me.”

“I’m sorry this has happened to you.”

### **2. Gather Information**

“What else happened?”

“Who is hurting you?”

“Has this person or others from his/her group bothered you before?”

“What has been done about it by you or anyone else?”

“Who else have you told about it?”

### **3. Make a Plan to Ensure Safety**

Help the student to brainstorm solutions and make a plan for staying safe. This plan should include:

- How to avoid further encounters with students who bullied (e.g. how the adults will keep the child who bullied away from the child who was targeted)
- What he or she can do if bullying continues.
- Who the student will tell if there is another incident

For each aspect of the plan consider:

- Is it safe?
- How might people feel?
- Is it fair?
- Will it work?

(adapted from the problem-solving model used in *Second Step: A Violence Prevention Program*, United States National Institute for Justice and the Committee for Children, 1998)

**Assure the student that action will be taken with the student(s) responsible.**



#### **4. Follow-up**

Check in with the student within a few days to determine the success of the plan and the student's vulnerability to further bullying:

“Have you been able to put your part of the safety plan into practice?”

“How well did it work?”

“Has any more bullying occurred?” (Note: type of bullying could have changed but bullying behaviour continued eg. physical bullying may have changed to verbal bullying). If so, further intervention with student who bullied may be required.

“If the plan hasn't worked, what else could be tried?”

- ▶ Remind the student to seek adult help if the bullying reoccurs.
- ▶ Let the student know you will continue to check in with her or him from time to time.
- ▶ Tell the student, in general terms, that there have been consequences for the student(s) who was bullying him or her.
- ▶ Consider the use of restorative intervention strategies (see page 153) as a means for bringing the two parties together to resolve the issue and restore or strengthen the relationship between the students involved in the incident(s) if the student who was bullied is agreeable with the idea.

If there is concern that this student may continue to be vulnerable to bullying by other students, it may be prudent to involve other supports (eg. Youth workers, behavioural team, community agencies) to work with her or him individually or in a small group. Children who are chronically bullied may benefit from opportunities to build their self-esteem, practise assertive responses and other self-protective strategies, and enhance their friendship skills.

If this situation involved elements of discrimination based on race, colour, gender, ability, sexual orientation, etc., it may be advisable to assess the school or classroom climate in terms of inclusiveness and equity. Does the school environment welcome diversity, celebrate differences and strive to make sure that every student can see parts of him/herself and his/her culture reflected somewhere within the school and its personnel? Resources to help support inclusive teaching (e.g. “We're Erasing Prejudice for Good” from the Elementary Teacher's Federation of Ontario) are available from the board resource centre or



may be available in some school libraries. For more information contact the consultant from your board :

**Waterloo Catholic District School Board**

Faith Formation, Religion,  
Family Life and Human Sexuality,  
Equity, Race Relations and Ethnocultural Consultant  
Waterloo Catholic District School Board  
(519) 578-3660 Fax (519) 578-9967

**Waterloo District School Board**

English as a Second Language Consultant  
Waterloo Region District School Board  
(519) 570-0003 Fax (519) 742-1364

**5. Contact Parents**

**If this is one in a series of bullying incidents or a very serious incident, contact the student's parents to inform them of the incident and the school's plan for supporting their child. Inform them of the school's plan for intervening with the students responsible for the bullying. Make a plan for any further contact that may be required.**

In cases of more entrenched or problematic bullying, the school may choose to have a meeting with the parents. If such a meeting is called, the second responder may:

- ▶ inform the parents of the school's efforts to support their child
- ▶ discuss the plan made with the student and ask the parents for input and/or to support the plan at home
- ▶ listen to the parents' concerns and answer any questions
- ▶ provide strategies and/or refer to resources that the parents may use at home to reinforce the school's efforts (see Section 6: Resources, page 487)
- ▶ offer school-based support for their child if available (e.g youth worker)
- ▶ consider referral to community-based support services (see page 491)
- ▶ encourage parents to inform the school if the bullying continues.



## INTERVENING WITH STUDENTS WHO OBSERVE BULLYING

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Most times, bullying incidents are strongly encouraged, implicitly or explicitly, by those who witness the incidents. In such cases, it is important for second responders to debrief with those students, using questions such as the following as a guide:

Some words that describe bullying behaviour:

- taunting
- making fun of
- embarrassing
- giving put-downs
- insulting
- name-calling
- gossiping
- ignoring
- excluding
- isolating
- confining
- harassing
- threatening
- frightening
- destroying property
- shoving
- hitting
- assaulting
- inappropriate touching

- How would you describe what happened/has been happening?
- What makes this a bullying situation?
- At what point did you make the choice to stay and watch the bullying happen?
- How might your presence have influenced the behaviour of the student who was bullying?
- What were your feelings as you watched the bullying incident(s)?
- How do you feel about it now?
- How do you think the student who was being bullied felt?
- What could you have done differently, either to intervene or to prevent the incident(s)?
- What action could you take now to make the student who was bullied feel happier and safer at school?

If the resources are available, it may be beneficial to these students to become part of an empathy building program or a social skills program (see lists on pages 494 and 500). It may also be appropriate for these students to be given a role in promoting the school statement/bullying prevention policy, for example, by doing a skit at the next assembly about bullying and how bystanders can stop it.

## INTERVENING WITH STUDENTS WHO ARE BULLYING

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A system for responding to students who bully must take into account the fact that bullying behaviour among children is on a continuum ranging from transient and incidental to a chronic pattern of interacting with others. All children need the guidance of adults in developing the skills necessary for getting along with others. **While**

**inappropriate or hurtful behaviour must clearly be stopped and prohibited, as outlined by the Safer Schools Act, the ultimate goals of any form of intervention are changes in thinking and behaving.**

**These types of change require that children have the opportunity to work with adults who can help them reflect on their mistakes and to learn alternative, more socially appropriate behaviour.**

**The following steps form a comprehensive and shared response to the student who has bullied. Refer to the tracking form later in this section (page 162), which models a process for staff to initiate a report and to note which steps they have completed.**

## **STEPS IN RESPONDING TO A BULLYING INCIDENT/SITUATION**

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### **First Responders**

1. Send students responsible for bullying to a predetermined location (e.g, edge of playground, office, classroom) and advise them that there will be follow-up.
2. Initiate a discipline report (or a bullying case report, if this is one in a series of incidents) and alert an appropriate second responder.

### **Second Responder**

1. Gather additional information as required.
2. Identify and apply the appropriate level of intervention and respond accordingly. (Details on how to identify and apply appropriate levels of intervention are provided later in this section.)
3. Complete the bullying case report.

 **RESPOND DIRECTLY** 

The severity and duration of the bullying behaviour determines the level of response required. The following pages describe a three-level response system, based on the work of Gail Ryan (1989) at the University of Colorado. Levels I and II are applied sequentially, while Level III may be applied following Level II or it may be applied to any bullying situation that is considered serious when it first comes to light.

**LEVEL 1**

What to do at the **first signs** of bullying

- 1. Describe and
- 2. Respond

**LEVEL 2**

What to do when the bullying behaviour is **repeated**

- 1. Describe and
- 2. Respond
- 3. Confront\*
- and
- 4. Prohibit

**LEVEL 3**

What to do when the bullying behaviour is **frequent or serious**

- 1. Describe and
- 2. Respond
- 3. Confront and
- 4. Prohibit
- 5. Report and Refer

\* In this instance, confront means to challenge, not provoke.

**LEVEL 1**

1. Describe
2. Respond

**LEVEL 1: WHAT TO DO  
AT THE FIRST SIGN OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR**

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This level of intervention is appropriate for those situations in which bullying behaviour is first evident. In such cases, adults have become aware of a few relatively minor incidents that, together, constitute bullying.

The second responder gathers additional information as necessary before initiating a Level 1 response.

1. *Describe* the behaviour in terms that are clear and direct and label it as bullying behaviour.
2. *Respond* by:
  - ▶ pointing out the impact on the others
  - ▶ reminding the student of behavioural expectations

**NOTE:**

Use the Level 3 response for bullying behaviour that is serious in nature, even if it has only recently come to light.

Either the student's teacher or principal should contact the parents. Inform the parents that the student has been spoken to about the behaviour and suggest that they may wish to reinforce the same message at home. Do not reveal the identity of the other student involved to protect their privacy.

**The following is an example of a Level 1 response:**

*On a few occasions, the teacher has overheard Janet, one of her students, tell other students in the class that their drawing or writing projects are dumb. Today, the teacher sees Janet put an "F" on Simon's math paper. She takes Janet aside and talks to her about the behaviour. "Janet, I saw you put an F on Simon's paper and I have heard you making unkind comments about other children's work. Those are putdowns. When you put down other students' work, it can make them feel unhappy and discouraged. When you do that again and again, it is called bullying. We don't allow bullying here. At our school, we treat others with kindness and respect."*

1. *Describe* the behaviour in terms that are clear and direct. ("Janet, I saw you put an F on Simon's paper and I have heard you making



unkind comments about other children’s work. Those are put-downs.”)

2. *Respond* by:

- ▶ pointing out the impact on others (“When you put down other students’ work, it can make them feel unhappy and discouraged”)
- ▶ reminding the student of behavioural expectations (“At our school we treat others with kindness and respect”)

In some cases, this first level of response will be sufficient to stop the bullying behaviour. However, if the teacher believes that the student would benefit from further (early) intervention or if the behaviour recurs, the teacher may wish to:

- ▶ have the student complete a self-reflection activity sheet (see the sample Self-Reflection Activity Sheets page 165-170)
- ▶ impart a social learning intervention
- ▶ use a restorative intervention.

(The teacher here would have completed a bullying case form and sent it to the office for filing. This kind of tracking helps to flag a pattern of behaviour, especially if other bullying behaviours are noticed and reported by other teachers outside this child’s own classroom. )

**LEVEL 2**

1. Describe
2. Respond
3. Confront
4. Prohibit

**LEVEL 2: WHAT TO DO  
WHEN BULLYING BEHAVIOUR IS REPEATED**

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At this level of intervention, the student has already had a first level intervention, but the pattern of bullying behaviour has continued, aimed at the same child or another child or children. In such cases, the *describe* and *respond* steps are repeated, and new steps, *confront (challenge)* and *prohibit* are added.

The second responder gathers additional information as necessary before initiating a Level 2 response.

1. *Describe* the behaviour in terms that are clear and direct and label it as bullying behaviour.
2. *Respond* by:
  - ▶ pointing out the impact on the others
  - ▶ reminding the student of behavioural expectations

3. *Confront* the student about the behaviour.
4. *Prohibit* the behaviour or set limits by:
  - ▶ telling the student that the behaviour is not allowed
  - ▶ imposing a school sanction
  - ▶ imposing a social learning intervention, which can be part of the sanction or a follow-up to it.

The administrator should contact the parents to inform them about the incident and ask to meet with each set of parents separately. The identity of the other students involved should be kept confidential.

In their meeting with the parents, the administrator should:

- discuss the student's behaviour and the school's immediate response
- explain the school's procedure for responding to bullying behaviours and the next step in helping their child to learn more appropriate ways of interacting with peers.

**The following is an example of a Level 2 response:**

*Lenny, who is eleven, has been picking on younger children on the playground. The adult supervising the playground has talked to him, given him a time-out and filled out a bullying incident report on three occasions. Following each incident, Lenny's teacher spoke with him about the behaviour. He described the behaviour, talked about the impact on the younger children, and reminded him of the behavioural expectations at school. He also spoke with Lenny's parents. To encourage Lenny to develop relationships with children his own age, the teacher arranged for Lenny to participate in a five-a-side soccer game during lunch hours.*

*It appeared that Lenny had stopped the behaviour until one of his classmates approached the teacher on duty at recess saying that Lenny was forcing some younger kids to stay in a corner of the playground and threatening to hurt them if they told an adult. This time, the teacher intervened and sent Lenny, along with a bullying incident report, to the principal's office, where Lenny completed a self-reflection activity sheet. When the teacher and principal spoke with Lenny, they began by repeating their earlier message. They went on to*



*confront him about his behaviour and prohibit it by imposing a consequence. “We have spoken to you before about picking on younger children. You do not have the right to treat anyone that way. For the next week, you will spend recess and lunch in a supervised area of the library. We are very concerned about your behaviour, and we will be having a meeting with your parents to discuss it.” Lenny was also given the task of researching books on the topic of bullying and writing a report on his findings.*

1. *Describe* the behaviour in terms that are clear and direct and label it as bullying behaviour. (“Lenny, you have been threatening younger children and forcing them to stay in a corner of the playground. That is bullying behaviour.”)
2. *Respond* by:
  - ▶ pointing out the impact on others (“The children are frightened when you do that. It causes me to be very concerned.”)
  - ▶ reminding the student of behavioural expectations (“At our school, we treat others with respect and help them to stay safe.”)
3. *Confront* the student about the behaviour. (“We have spoken to you before about picking on younger children.”)
4. *Prohibit* the behaviour or set limits by:
  - ▶ telling the student that the behaviour is not allowed (“You do not have the right to treat anyone that way.”)
  - ▶ imposing a school sanction (“For the next week, you will spend recess and lunch in a supervised area of the library. We are very concerned about your behaviour and we will be having a meeting with your parents to discuss it.”)
  - ▶ imposing a social learning intervention, which can be part of the sanction or a follow-up to it (“I want you to use this library time to research the topic of bullying and prepare a report about its effects. I will read your report and then we will discuss it.”)



**LEVEL 3**

1. Describe
2. Respond
3. Confront
4. Prohibit
5. Report
6. Refer

**LEVEL 3: WHAT TO DO  
WHEN BULLYING BEHAVIOUR IS FREQUENT OR  
SERIOUS IN NATURE**

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A Level 3 intervention is warranted when a student's bullying behaviour is not responding to adult intervention and/or the nature and extent of the behaviour is serious enough to cause psychological or physical harm to other students. School staff will continue to *describe*, *respond*, and *prohibit*, however they will also *report and refer* to resources outside the school.

The second responder gathers additional information as necessary before initiating a Level 3 response.

1. *Describe* the behaviour in terms that are clear and direct and label it as bullying behaviour.
2. *Respond* by:
  - ▶ pointing out the impact on the others
  - ▶ reminding the student of behavioural expectations.
3. *Confront (challenge)* the student about the behaviour.
4. *Prohibit* the behaviour or set limits by:
  - ▶ telling the student that the behaviour is not allowed
  - ▶ imposing a school sanction and/or an individual student behaviour plan
  - ▶ imposing a social learning intervention, which can be part of the sanction or a follow-up to it.

The administrator should contact the parents of both the person(s) who bullied and the target to inform them about the situation and ask to meet with each separately. The identity of the other students involved should be kept confidential.

In the meeting with the parents of the student who is bullying, the administrator should:



- ▶ discuss the student's behaviour and the school's immediate response
- ▶ explain the school's procedure for responding to bullying behaviours and the next step in helping their child to learn more appropriate ways of interacting with peers.

*Report and Refer.* Depending upon the circumstances, a report or referral to any of the following might be appropriate:

- ▶ Police
- ▶ Family and Children's Services of Waterloo Region
- ▶ Youth Worker, Behaviour Team or School Psychologist
- ▶ Community Agencies such as KW Counselling, Catholic Family Counselling, etc. (page 491 for list of community agencies)

### **Reporting to Police (519-653-7700)**

In considering whether or not to inform and involve the police, it is important to remember that the police may be able to play two important roles:

- ▶ **Supporting the school's overall response to bullying.** Many schools work closely with Community Policing Officers. Where this is the case, schools are encouraged to consult with an officer to determine what role the officer may be able to play in responding to serious situations of bullying. Perhaps she or he would be available to attend the school to meet with students who have been bullied or students who have been bullying. The officer could talk with the students who have been bullied about strategies for dealing with such situations. The officer may also be able to discuss the serious nature of bullying with the student responsible for bullying.
- ▶ **Responding to bullying incidents that may be considered criminal offences.** Although bullying is not usually thought of as potentially criminal, **many forms of bullying behaviour, if committed by a person over 12, may constitute a criminal offence (e.g., criminal harassment).** **It is important that school staff report to police those behaviours that might constitute criminal conduct, especially if a physical injury has occurred. Not only is this important for the school, its climate, and the safety of others, it is important for the students directly involved in the incident.** Even though the student may not be charged, reporting the incident to the police strengthens the

message to the student responsible for bullying that these behaviours are not acceptable—at school or in the community. In

many communities, the police may refer young people for counselling as an alternative to criminal charges. These resources can play an important part in providing support to that student in learning appropriate ways to relate to others.

### **Reporting to Family and Children’s Services of Waterloo Region (519-576-0540)**

When bullying behaviour becomes entrenched as a child’s consistent behaviour pattern, there may be reason to believe that the child is experiencing difficulties in other aspects of his or her life. When a child is consistently severely abusive to a peer or peers, schools should consider whether a report to Family and Children’s Services would be appropriate.

A report to Family and Children’s Services is appropriate if a staff member has reason to believe that:

- ▶ a child needs protection from the actions of a caregiver

Note: Family and Children’s Services will not intervene in situations of bullying between students.

In determining whether or not a report is appropriate, consider the following:

- ▶ the consistency and severity of the behaviours
- ▶ whether the behaviour persists or escalates despite repeated interventions
- ▶ parents’ response to the school’s concern is absent despite repeated (and documented) attempts by school staff to ask the parents to take action.
- ▶ whether the school has concerns about the level of supervision and support at home
- ▶ whether there are other vulnerable children in the home
- ▶ whether the bullying behaviour is one of several indicators that the student may be in need of protection from abuse or neglect

School staff are always welcome to call the intake worker and consult on a situation.

For detailed information on reporting suspected abuse or neglect, refer to the protocol from your board.

### **Referring to Community Supports**

Each school and community has its own resources to support interventions with severe behaviour concerns. It is important for the school to make clear connections with these supports in constructing their response plan so that they are familiar with the resources available and how and when to make appropriate referrals. It is important to note that reports to the police or Family and Children's Services may well result in referrals to agencies in the community that are able to support the school's efforts. (See list of community agencies, page 491).

#### **The following is an example of a Level 3 response:**

*Two grade 7 students, George and Pam, report to the school principal that a friend of theirs is being severely bullied. The students explain that since the beginning of the school year, two boys from another grade 7 class, Sunny and Rafino, have been spreading embarrassing rumours about their friend Paulo, following him home from school, and threatening to beat him up. Last night, when they were walking home together, the two boys approached and started taunting him. When Paulo shouted back that what they were saying was not true, Sunny grabbed Paulo's arms and pinned him down, while Rafino punched Paulo in the stomach. Sunny and Rafino said that if Paulo, George, or Pam told anyone about this, they would tell the whole school that the rumours are true. Then they ran away.*

*The principal thanked the students for reporting and assured them that action would be taken. She gathered further information about the nature and extent of the incidents by first talking to Paulo. Then she and the classroom teacher spoke with Sunny and Rafino separately, each of whom initially denied the incidents. However, after some discussion and being told that their parents would be contacted, both boys admitted to the bullying. The teacher and principal followed the procedure of describe, respond, confront, and prohibit. After consulting with the school counsellor and reporting the incident to the school liaison police officer, they met with the parents of each boy to agree upon a plan.*

1. *Describe* the behaviour in terms that are clear and direct, labelling it bullying behaviour. (“You have been bullying Paulo by following him, calling him names, and spreading rumours about him. That is called harassment. Yesterday, when you held him down and punched him, you committed a physical assault.”)
2. *Respond by:*
  - ▶ pointing out the impact on others (“When we heard about this, we were very upset. Paulo feels so humiliated that he does not want to come to school.”)
  - ▶ reminding the student of behavioural expectations (“At our school, we treat everyone with dignity and respect. Everyone here has the right to be safe, physically and emotionally.”)
3. *Confront* the student about the behaviour. (“These are very serious incidents; in fact, they are against the law.”)
4. *Prohibit* the behaviour or set limits by:
  - ▶ telling the student that the behaviour is not allowed (“This must stop immediately! We will be reporting this to the police and meeting with your parents.”)
  - ▶ imposing a school sanction (“Your parents will be asked to pick you up from school each day for the next week. Also, Sunny for the next week you will spend lunch and recess in Mr. Chong’s classroom. Rafino, you will spend lunch and recess with Ms. Jones.”)
  - ▶ imposing a social learning intervention, which can be part of the sanction or a followup to it (“You will each be helping these teachers with projects they are doing on bullying. We will meet again to discuss this.”)
5. *Report and Refer*

The incident was reported to the police and an officer met with each boy and his parents. No charges were laid; however, the students were told that this was a very serious incident and that if it happens again they could be charged with assault and intimidation. The parents were referred to community support agencies that could provide counselling. The parents agreed to make contact with one of the agencies.



## SCHOOL SAFETY AND SUPPORT PLANS

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In some instances, a school may be so concerned about the level of bullying behaviour that they may consider developing an individual safety and support plan for the student who is bullying. **A safety and support plan is a set of external controls and limits designed to help a student gain control over his or her behaviour and to protect other children.** An effective plan also supports the student's participation in age-appropriate activities with peers.

**A safety and support plan is developed collaboratively** with school and school community professionals. A team is formed to create, implement, and monitor the plan. The plan may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- supervision of the student upon arrival at school, during recess, lunch, after school, and any other less structured times
- designated play areas
- specific behaviour management strategies including a plan for reinforcing appropriate behaviour (developed in conjunction with school/district behaviour resource teachers)
- a plan for involving the student in positive activities with peers
- scheduled review and update of the plan.

**A safety and support plan should never be considered a permanent arrangement.** As the school year progresses and those responsible for monitoring the plan learn more about the student, the plan should be altered. **The goal is for the student to learn to think about his/her behaviour and to choose to behave respectfully so that eventually the plan can be removed and the student can carry on at school as any other student.**

## **APPLYING SOCIAL LEARNING INTERVENTIONS**

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A social learning intervention is a structured activity, guided by an adult, that causes a student to think about his or her behaviour and its impact on others. Ideally, a social learning intervention requires positive social interaction with others. It provides the student with the opportunity to:

- take action to make reparation for any harm done
- reconcile with the student she or he has bullied
- learn and practise pro-social behaviour
- make a positive contribution to the climate of the school.

When developing social learning interventions, consider the following:

- include a range of interventions from which to choose as some may be suitable for primary students while others will work best with intermediates
- keep in mind the four goals of an effective school response to bullying—communication, empathy, accountability, and pro-social skills
- be fair and logical, not belittling or humiliating
- reflect the integrity of the school statement
- convey to the student responsible for bullying that she or he belongs to the school community and has some responsibility for the social well-being of everyone in that community.

**Examples of social learning interventions** include the following:

- ▶ complete a self-reflection activity and discuss it with an adult (see Self-Reflection Activity Sheets page 165-170)  
Note: If sending work away with a student, make a copy of the assignment in case the original fails to be returned.
- ▶ participate in a restorative intervention strategy (described in next section)
- ▶ assign to a lunch-hour problem-solving group
- ▶ make a verbal apology that includes taking responsibility for the behaviour and saying what he or she will do to make the bullied student feel better
- ▶ write a letter or card of apology



## RESPOND DIRECTLY



- ▶ prepare and give an oral presentation on what it is like to be bullied and/or how students can help others who are being bullied
- ▶ find a story or book on the topic of bullying, read it to a younger class, and lead a discussion
- ▶ survey or interview students about their experiences with bullying and write or present a report
- ▶ write or draw something about bullying for the school newsletter
- ▶ participate in a role play about helping students who are bullied
- ▶ perform and record five acts of kindness
- ▶ teach a classmate a special skill
- ▶ help another student with a classroom activity
- ▶ repair or restore property or personal items she or he damaged
- ▶ participate in a supervised, structured game or sport during break times to learn co-operation skills
- ▶ accompany an adult supervisor at recess and assist in resolving disputes using a problem-solving model.

**It is important that each school determine social learning interventions that are most appropriate for its situation.**

## APPLYING RESTORATIVE INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

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A growing number of schools are employing restorative interventions in bullying situations. These interventions are broadly based on the principles of restorative justice used by the criminal justice system in several countries. Although these initiatives are at an early stage of development, **preliminary results indicate that the infusion of these values into bullying prevention plans have made a difference.** Some of the results experienced over the course of one year were reduction in the level of aggressive behaviour at school, and the overall improvement of the tone of the school environment (Classen 1996).

A restorative intervention approach views bullying situations as primarily a violation of human relationships, and secondarily as an infraction of the school's discipline code.

### NOTE:

Restorative Interventions are not always appropriate. They require pre-teaching to help the person who bullied reflect on his/her behaviour and feel empathy for the person they targeted. The emphasis is on learning, not punishment.



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### **Restorative Interventions**

- focus on the impact of the behaviour on others, rather than on the rules broken
- show concern for children who are bullied and the children who are bullying
- provide support and accountability to both children
- work toward restoring the children who have been bullied by empowering them and responding to their needs, as they see them; they need to hear that what happened to them was wrong, unfair and undeserved
- are the first step in a restoring and healing process—both children must recognize this
- are part of a process for making things as right as possible, rather than simply punishing the “offender”
- support the “offender” while encouraging him or her to understand, accept, and carry out obligations
- encourage collaboration and reintegration rather than coercion and isolation.

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Interventions based on this philosophy are intended to bring both children together to talk about the situation and find resolution. Because **a child’s psychological and physical safety must be of primary concern**, these may be used most appropriately as early interventions. **Both parties involved must freely choose to participate in the process.** Adults must be mindful of any power imbalance between the children and make every effort to equalize it.

The three strategies discussed here suggest ways of dealing with bullying that are consistent with the philosophy of restorative intervention. Incidentally, **the no-blame approach and the problem solving circle are also used often during classroom meetings, to deal with issues/behaviours (including bullying) that are interfering with healthy human relationships.**



## THE NO-BLAME APPROACH

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The no-blame approach seeks a constructive, non-punitive solution to the problem of bullying behaviour. British psychologists Barbara Maines and George Robinson (1992) developed this method. **The intent of the process is to acknowledge and build the students' capacity for resolving student conflict.** It is **simple** to follow and has shown to be **effective without being too time consuming.** The teacher, principal, or appropriate support staff can easily follow the steps involved in this approach.

### IMPORTANT NOTE:

One must carefully assess the student who has been bullied to ensure that it is safe for them to participate in this kind of intervention and that they are not just doing it because they feel they can't say no. There is definitely risk associated with the student sharing his/her feelings.

- ▶ **Interview the child who has been bullied.** Talk with the student about his or her feelings. Do not question the child directly about the incident, but do try to establish who is involved. Explain the no-blame approach to the student, and determine if the student is willing, or strong enough, to be part of the process. The student's safety and security in this process are paramount.
- ▶ **Arrange a meeting for all students involved.** Include children who joined in but did not directly bully the other child.
- ▶ **Explain the process and outline the problem.** Outline the purpose of the meeting. Briefly outline guidelines for discussion, and then tell the children how the child who was bullied is feeling. You may want to use a drawing, poem, or piece of writing produced by the student to illustrate this. Do not discuss the details of the incident or allocate blame to any of the children who participate in the bullying incident. The intent in this part of the meeting is to convey the impact that this incident has had on the student who has been bullied and to help students develop empathy for one another.
- ▶ **Share responsibility.** State clearly that you know the group has been involved in a bullying incident, and that they can do something about it. Focus on resolving the problem rather than blaming the students. Say, in a non-judgmental voice, "In our school it is important that everyone feels safe. We care about each other, and we treat people with respect. In a moment, I want each of us to take a turn to say how we might help [student] feel safer and less anxious about being in school."
- ▶ **Identify solutions.** Ask each child to suggest ways in which they could help the child who has been bullied feel happier in school. Acknowledge each idea, but do not ask students to make a commitment to these solutions at this point.

► **Let the students take action.** End the meeting by giving responsibility to the group to solve the problem. Say, “I have heard some constructive suggestions today of how the group

can resolve this situation. I am confident that you will follow through and a solution will be found. Let’s meet [time and place] and you can tell me how successful you have been.”

► **Meet them again.** After about a week, follow-up with each student. Find out what has been happening. In some circumstances, it may be better to follow-up with each student individually, to avoid any new group accusations about who helped and who didn’t. The important thing is to ascertain that the bullying has stopped and the child who was bullied is feeling better.



## THE PROBLEM SOLVING CIRCLE

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The purpose of a problem-solving circle is to have all parties in the situation:

- ▶ understand that every member of a group has some responsibility for the well-being of group members (e.g., students have some responsibility for the well-being of other students)
- ▶ recognize that problems can be addressed without blame
- ▶ find solutions to the situation that will not cause more anger or revenge.

In many bullying cases, there may appear to be a clear bullying situation in which it is appropriate to impart a consequence on the student who is bullying. In many cases, however, the issues are less clear, and this process of problem solving may be appropriate.

**One advantage of this approach is that by not clearly determining where to assign blame, and by clarifying everyone’s social responsibility, there is a reduction of shame and guilt, and therefore a reduction of anger and revenge.**

The procedure for the problem-solving circle is as follows:

### **IMPORTANT NOTE:**

One must carefully assess the student who has been bullied to ensure that it is safe for them to participate in this kind of intervention and that they are not just doing it because they feel they can’t say no. As well, the adult leading this circle needs to have skill in facilitating groups, to ensure that the power in the group is balanced and everyone gets heard, as well as to gain commitment for change from all the members.

- ▶ Establish the ground rules (e.g. one person talks at a time, no one group member speaks out of turn or interrupts, speak respectfully and calmly, no insults or raised voices).
- ▶ All those involved in the situation are brought together and seated in a circle. The group is not left unattended, and no discussion is allowed before the group leader is present and has outlined the rules.
- ▶ The leader explains that this group has been called together to solve a problem, not to lay blame. No one is “in trouble.” The rules are outlined.
- ▶ The leader asks the question, “What Happened?” and each person adds a piece of the story. It may be necessary to go around the circle several times before the story is clear and each person feels heard.
- ▶ Strictly adhere to the rules and acknowledge each contribution in a respectful and non-judgmental way. One technique is to simply say “thank you” after each contribution.

- ▶ Follow the same procedure for the questions, “What could you have done differently so that this would not have happened?”

“What could you do now to make things better?” These questions will be very difficult for students who are entrenched in a “good person/ bad person” frame of reference, so it is very important to solicit an answer from each student as a demonstration that each is willing to move from that stance.

- ▶ Schedule a brief follow-up meeting of the group to monitor their individual commitment to “make things better.” This could take place from a day to a week later, as appropriate.

**Not all children who bully will choose to be co-operative. Therefore, there is a need for the school authority to make decisions for the child who is not co-operative. Consequences imposed should be reasonable, restorative, and respectful of both the child who has been bullied and the child who bullied.**

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

Developmentally, students in the early grades may not be able to learn from this strategy as they don't quite understand the concept and may experience it as hurtful. This technique is better used with later grades where they may have better conceptualization and analytical abilities.

## **REVERSE ROLE PLAY**

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In situations where it does not seem appropriate to bring both sides together, the reverse role play is a good way to encourage empathy. It is an especially useful exercise prior to eliciting an apology from the student responsible for bullying.

This method is helpful as both a means for increasing the understanding of all parties involved in bullying, as well as for developing empathy in the child perpetrating bullying behaviour. In addition, it enables the child who was bullying to practise new behaviour.

Reverse role play begins with the student who bullied re-enacting his or her part in a bullying episode while a staff member plays the role of the student who was bullied. During the re-enactment, the staff member may ask questions to gain clarification about the situation and the role of the child who was bullying. The situation is then reversed with the staff member playing the role of the student who bullied.

While roles are reversed, the student responsible for bullying is encouraged to reconstruct the incidents realistically, including details of the time, location, and names of others involved. Following the role play, the staff member discusses the situation with the student, questioning to determine how the student felt. The meeting should be closed by the staff member providing a summary of the activity and determining future action for the student (e.g., a written or verbal apology, a commitment to no further bullying, agreement to meet again).

## **TRACKING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR**

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The most basic prerequisite for an effective response to bullying at school is staff awareness of bullying situations as they occur over time.

A simple tracking system such as the sample (seen in Step 8, page 115), combined with the sample bullying case report (page 162) enables school staff to:

- co-ordinate their response to bullying situations
- ascertain the nature and frequency of bullying at school
- identify those students who are engaging in bullying situations
- ensure that the needs of students who have been bullied are addressed.
- determine the level of response/intervention required to help students who are bullying to change their behaviour
- provide documented evidence that the students' concerns were acknowledged and that the appropriate responses and interventions were enacted
- provide data for administration reports on discipline activities

All bullying case reports should be kept confidential in a single computer file or binder in the school office.



### **LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE GOOD KID SID**

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**NOTE:**

There may also be an increase of discipline reporting in general as awareness of behaviour issues is raised and as bullying is defined apart from aggressive behaviours.

- ▶ **Responding to bullying situations consistently is very important!** When bullying situations are consistently responded to, the students develop trust in the reporting system and are more likely to feel safe in reporting bullying situations (remember, it takes courage to report on peers--fear of retaliation is a reality!). This is of particular importance early on in the initiative, when students may test the plan, just to see if adults are really committed to enacting it.
- ▶ Expect a sharp increase in the reporting of bullying cases in the first year of implementation. Make provisions to be able to free up



the necessary time to deal with them (year one would be an excellent time to apply for additional administrative support).

This work will be rewarded in later years as staff in the *Good Kid Sid* pilot project reported a decrease in time spent on general discipline problems in later years.

- ▶ Give explicit information to all partners in the school community about the menu of ways that bullying may be dealt with. It may take some time for both adults and students to understand and accept that social learning interventions or restorative interventions may be the most appropriate way to deal with bullying in a particular situation, as opposed to punishment alone.
- ▶ Administrators and staff may need support to learn to behave more assertively to stop bullying behaviours, just as many of the students will. Through educating staff about bullying, some staff began to recognize bullying behaviour that was occurring in relationships between adults within the school community. They were concerned that students could thus be receiving conflicting messages. Some sought support to be able to describe, respond, confront and set limits on those using bullying behaviours.
- ▶ Existing discipline tracking mechanisms can easily be adapted to track bullying cases. For example, paper sheets can be altered to flag the hallmarks of bullying behaviour (see sample, page 115). Many administrators already use software to track the statistics they must keep for their school and it can be modified or changed to collect information about bullying. Networking with other administrators can help to discover effective ways of compiling and using this data (see list of experienced administrators, page 487).
- ▶ The tracking of bullying cases often reveals that a few students are responsible for most of the bullying; this becomes clearer especially after the first year or so of the initiative. Once this pattern is revealed, these children may be appropriately intervened with in a more comprehensive manner, since it may be that their bullying behaviour is just “the tip of the iceberg” with regard to their unresolved issues.





RESPOND DIRECTLY



# Bullying Case Report (Page 1)

## Responsibility/Instructions

### First Responder(s):

1. Describe incident in space below on page 1.
2. Complete steps 1 and 2 on page 2 (Steps Taken to Support Students Being Bullied).
3. Complete appropriate section on page 3 (Steps Taken to Intervene with Student(s) Responsible for the Bullying Behaviour).
4. Alert second responder(s).

### Second Responder(s):

1. Complete steps 3 to 5 on page 2.
2. Complete appropriate section on page 3.
3. File report in a separate binder or file in the school office.

## Report of Situation (To be completed by First Responder)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student(s) Being Bullied: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student(s) Who Bullied: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of First Responder: \_\_\_\_\_

### What Has Been Happening?

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### Comments :

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SAMPLE



# Bullying Case Report (Page 2)

## Steps Taken to Support Student(s) Being Bullied

Name of Student(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**First Responder:** *(Complete the first two steps only and initial each)*

**1. Acknowledge/Affirm**

- “You were right to tell me”
- “I’m sorry this happened to you.”
- “Has this kind of thing happened before?”

**2. Gather Information**

- “What else happened?”
- “Who is doing it?”
- “What have you tried?”

**Second Responder:**

- Gather more information as needed
- Complete and initial the remaining steps

**3. Make a Plan**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

- Where will the student play and with whom? (i.e., How will you help student avoid further encounters with students who bullied?)
- What will he or she will do if bullying continues?
- Who will the student tell?

**For each aspect of the plan consider:**

- Is it safe?
- How might people feel?
- Is it fair?
- Will it work?

Assure the student that action will be taken with the student(s) responsible.

**4. Follow-up** **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

- Contact Parents

**Outcome(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

SAMPLE

# **Bullying Case Report** (Page 3)

## **Steps Taken to Intervene with Student(s) Responsible for the Bullying Behaviour**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Student(s) Responsible for Bullying Behaviour:** \_\_\_\_\_

**First Responder:**

Describe initial interventions undertaken:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Forward this Case Report to second responder**

**Second Responder:**

- Talk to student(s) involved: gather more information as required**
- Determine appropriate level of intervention**
- Record below**
- Refer to principal as necessary**
- Place form in tracking binder or file in office**

**Level of Intervention Applied:** (check one)

- Level I Response** — Describe and Respond
- Level II Response** — Describe, Respond, Confront, Prohibit
- Level III Response** — Describe, Respond, Confront, Prohibit, Report/Refer

**Comments:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Record any Social Learning Interventions:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Strategies Required to Respond to Students Who Witnessed Bullying Behaviour:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**SAMPLE**



# Student Self-Reflection Activity sheet

(adapted from McKechnie Elementary, Vancouver)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Recently you were involved in an alleged bullying incident. In order to help prevent such incidents it is important for you to tell us, in your words, what happened.

1. When did this happen? **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time of Day:** \_\_\_\_\_

2. Where did this happen? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Who was there? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What happened? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Why did it happen? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. What could have been done differently? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**SAMPLE**



# Student Self-Reflection Activity (Page 1)

(adapted from St George's Catholic School in the Ottawa-Carleton Catholic District School Board)

## Primary

**Note:** This exercise, when complete, should be discussed with an appropriate adult.

**Student's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What did I do?**  hit  kicked  slapped  pushed  
 said something mean or called someone a name  
 told students not to play or work with this person  
 something else (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

**How do I think the other student felt?**  
 scared  upset  frustrated  weak  embarrassed  
 other (describe):  
\_\_\_\_\_

**How did I feel when this was happening?**  
 powerful  good  upset  angry  frustrated  
 other (describe):  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Why did you feel that way?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**It is ok to have feelings or thoughts. It is not ok to act out those feelings or thoughts by hurting someone else's body or their feelings. No matter what we are feeling, we need to respect other people in our actions.**

**If you are feeling that way again, what action could you take that would be more respectful?**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**SAMPLE**



# Student Self-Reflection Activity (Page 2)

Here are some things for you to think about and respond to:

1. Johnny is 7 years old and he does not like going to school. This is because the grade 5's follow him around calling him names and pushing him. They told him that if he tells the teacher they will beat him up.

Is this:  bullying  tattling  a problem that needs to be worked out

How do you think Johnny feels? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What could he do?  talk to a person he trusts  
 forget about it, the grade 5's only have 1 more year at this school  
 learn martial arts  get some bigger friends

2. Mary is 6 years old. She likes to play fun jokes on her classmates. Today, she played a joke on Alice who is also 6 years old and it did not go very well. Alice got mad and yelled at Mary, then she pushed her down.

Did Alice try to bully Mary by pushing her?  yes  no

What should Alice have done? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Peter is 8 years old and he keeps taking Allen's lunch. Allen is 5 years old and he is afraid of Peter because Peter is bigger than him. Allen has been going home hungry every day because he does not want to tell on Peter.

Is Peter bullying Allen?  yes  no

What could Peter do about this? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

SAMPLE



# Student Self-Reflection Activity

(adapted from St George’s Catholic School in the Ottawa-Carleton Catholic District School Board)

## At Home Assignment (Jr)

**Student’s Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

I am required to prepare this assignment due to my behaviour at school. It must be completed, signed by my parent(s) and returned to the principal in order to return to my regular classes.

**What did I do?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**What definition does the dictionary give for “respect”:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

It is ok to have feelings or thoughts. It is not ok to act out those feelings or thoughts by hurting someone else’s body or their feelings. Even when we are upset, we need to respect other people in our actions.

**What else could you have done in this situation, that would have shown respect for the other person?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**What should you say to the person that you hurt?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Why do we not tolerate bullying at our school?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent(s) Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent(s) Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student’s Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SAMPLE**



# Student Self-Reflection Activity (Page 1)

(adapted from St George's Catholic School in the Ottawa-Carleton Catholic District School Board)

## In-School Assignment (Jr. and Int.)

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

As a result of my behaviour towards another student I am required to complete this report, have it signed by my parent(s) and return it the principal.

What did I do? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

At the time that I did this, how did I feel? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How do you think the other student felt?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why was it wrong to do this?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the dictionary definition of violence?: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the dictionary definition of bullying? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the dictionary definition of respect?

\_\_\_\_\_

What could I do next time that would be respectful to the other person? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

SAMPLE





# Student Self-Reflection Activity (Page 2)

Why do we not tolerate bullying at our school? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Here are some situations for you to think about and respond to:

- 1. Eric is 12 years old and Jonny is 8 years old. Eric finds Johnny annoying and he decides he will scare him. Everyday he follows Johnny on to the school bus and he sits beside him. Each time Eric sits beside him, he tells Johnny (very quietly) that if he does not give him the dessert in his lunch that he will beat him up.

Is this considered bullying?:  yes  no

Why or Why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 2. Sarah is a grade 4 student. She noticed that one of the other grade 4 students was picking on a grade 1 student. She spoke to the grade 4 students and told them to stop treating the younger student so badly. She told her that this was scaring the little girl and it wasn't fair.

What report should be made to an adult? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Did Sarah make the right decision and why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I will act respectfully to other members of my school community from now on.

Parent(s) Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**SAMPLE**

