

# Limestone District School Board

## Bullying Awareness



## "Our Students... Our Future"

To view Board Procedures go to...  
[www.limestone.on.ca](http://www.limestone.on.ca)

For Ministry Legislation go to...  
<http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/index.html>

## Safe Schools: In Diverse and Inclusive Communities

### Bullying Prevention: Your Concerns are Our Concerns

As a parent, nothing is more important than your child's safety and well-being. At the Limestone District School Board, that's our priority, too. We're committed to providing a healthy, supportive learning and working environment for our students and staff. We know that students achieve their best when they feel safe, nurtured, welcomed, engaged, respected and included.

### What is Bullying?

Bullying is defined by the Ministry of Education as *"a form of repeated, persistent, aggressive behaviour that is directed at an individual or individuals that is intended to cause (or should be known to cause) fear, distress and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem or reputation."* Bullying is very different from conflict which naturally occurs between individuals. Instead, "...bullying occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance." Students may attain or maintain power over others in the school through real or perceived differences. Some areas of difference may be size, strength, age, intelligence, economic status, social status, solidarity of peer group, religion, ethnicity, disability, need for special education, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, or race.

### Types of Bullying & Examples

**Physical:** Repeated hitting, kicking, shoving, beating up, stealing, or damaging another person's property.

**Verbal:** Repeated name-calling, mocking, humiliating, teasing, threatening, sexist, racist or homophobic comments.

**Social:** Excluding others from the group, gossiping, spreading rumours, making another person or persons look foolish, and damaging another person's friendships.

**Electronic/Cyber:** The repeated use of electronic media (ie. email, cell phones, text, internet images and Facebook) to threaten, harass, embarrass, spread rumours, socially exclude, or damage reputations or friendships.

### Behaviours which may indicate your child is being bullied:

- Changes in typical mood: sullen, withdrawn, argumentative
- Being afraid or reluctant to go to school
- Feeling ill in the morning or skipping classes
- Repeatedly 'losing' belongings
- Coming home with damaged property
- Unexpected cuts, bruises or other injuries
- Drop in school performance
- Nightmares/disturbed sleep
- Frustration over very small things
- Taking a different route to school/going or leaving early or late
- Spending more time alone and avoiding being social with friends

### What to do if your child is being bullied:

- Talk and listen to your child to gain more information about their daily lives away from home
- Ask questions about their day like... who did you hang out with at lunch? What was the best/worst part of your day?
- Speak to your teacher or principal if you think your child is being bullied and follow up with them
- Teach your child to trust adults who can help stop the bullying
- Encourage your child to be independent, instead of you being overprotective
- Teach your child social skills, including confidence, needed to make new friends
- Seek help if you are concerned about your child's mental health

### Behaviours that may indicate that your child is bullying others:

- Teasing, taunting, harassing, or threatening friends, siblings, and/or adults
- Using physical aggression to control and intimidate
- Boasting about behaviour that is hurtful to others and not feeling any remorse or guilt
- Dominating and controlling friends in social interactions or purposefully excluding others from social situations

- Being cruel to animals
- Using electronic communications to intimidate or harass people
- Making friends with other aggressive children
- Coming home with things which do not belong to them

### What to do if your child is bullying:

- Take the problem seriously to prevent your child from having problems with relationships with others
- Talk to your child about the behaviour, keeping in mind that children who bully often place the blame on others
- Tell your child that you will not accept this type of behaviour and arrange for non-violent consequences which fit the seriousness of what your child has done
- Discuss the negative impact this behaviour has on others
- Give positive praise to others to show the importance of considerate behaviour
- Teach them ways to resolve conflict without violent words or actions
- Do not let them witness violent behaviour between family members
- Spend time with your child, especially doing activities and avoiding examples of violence or aggression in the media
- Increase your supervision when your child is with friends and discourage friendships with aggressive peers
- Speak to the teacher or principal if you think your child is having difficulty accepting responsibility for his/her behaviour
- Seek help if you are concerned about your child's mental health

We believe that no one deserves to be bullied and bullying behaviour is unacceptable. We teach students strategies to identify, deal with, and stop bullying behaviour. Any form of bullying needs to be reported to the school.

### **Behaviours which may indicate that your child has been a bystander to bullying:**

- Defends the bullying behaviour because he/she 'is my friend'
- Believes it is not their problem
- Says the child who has been victimized is 'not their friend', "deserved it", "needs to be toughened up", or they are a "loser"
- Would rather be part of the 'in' group than defend the child being victimized
- Believes there is nothing they can do
- They don't want to 'tattle tale' or 'rat'

### **What to do if your child has been a bystander to bullying:**

- Teach them to empathize with the person being victimized (to understand the feelings of the person being victimized)
- Help them to understand that there is a difference between "tattling" and "reporting" behaviours
- Tattling is purposefully telling to get someone into trouble. Reporting is purposefully telling someone to stop the bullying and to help the person exhibiting bullying behavior to change their behaviour
- Go and see the teacher or the principal to report what they have seen
- Teach your child to join with others to protect the child who is being bullied
- Explain the long term negative social effects that the victimized child will have if the bullying does not stop
- Encourage your child to make friends with others who are respectful and kind and to end relationships with those who cause pain
- Model kindness and courage
- Help support and problem solve with your child in the dilemma they face: stepping forward to stop someone else's behavior and facing potential consequences

## **Prevention Strategies:**

### **Positive School Climate:**

A positive school climate exists when all members of a school community feel safe, comfortable, and accepted. All schools have programs that promote and support positive behaviours and reflect Limestone District School Board Character Education and Restorative Practice initiatives.

### **Safe & Healthy Schools Committee/Team:**

During the 2010-2011 school year, each school will form a Safe Schools Team composed of school staff and a parent representative. The Safe Schools Team will use data related to bullying behaviours to monitor and review the effect of school bullying prevention programs. Data may include school climate survey information, student comments, staff input, and parent input.

### **Teaching Strategies:**

As part of the Ontario curriculum and school character education initiatives, lessons focus on developing healthy relationships and character, including preventing, recognizing, and responding to bullying.

### **Code of Conduct:**

All members of the school are familiar with and demonstrate understanding of the Board's and School's Code of Conduct which sets out expected standards for behaviour. The code of conduct for your child's school is a good reference for discussions.

### **How does the school and Board address Bullying?**

The first challenge in dealing with bullying is having knowledge that bullying is occurring. Students who bully are often very skilled at hiding their behaviour from adults and intimidating the person being bullied not to report. Likewise, students who are bullied do not report the bullying behaviour to school or parents for a number of reasons, including embarrassment and fear of retaliation. We need to work together keep each other informed when we think bullying might be happening.

### **The school and Board...**

- have a wide range of anti-bullying programs and procedures in place
- address bullying (as well as aggressive behaviour in general) in Codes of Behaviour
- have a range of consequences through progressive discipline for students who bully
- encourage the use of restorative practices like Mediating by Empowering with Nurturing Dialogue (MEND) as part of the response to bullying situations
- recognize the role of bystanders and those that aid and/or incite bullying behaviour
- have support mechanisms in place for students who are bullied
- work with Educational Services and the Limestone Human Rights Education Advisor to supplement resources and programs
- provide direct support to students and families
- invite parents to be partners in dealing with bullying
- assist families by acting as a liaison with community agencies

## **Bullying harms everyone and creates fear in the whole school community.**

For more information:

Ministry of Education  
[www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/bullying](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/bullying)  
*Bullying: We Can All Stop It*  
*A guide for parents*

KidsHelp – 1-800-668-6868  
[www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)  
Kids Help Phone is Canada's leading youth counselling service, moving kids from distress and isolation to confidence and competence. They are available day and night by phone and by Web.

PREVNet – [www.prevnet.ca](http://www.prevnet.ca)  
Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence.

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