



Hebrew Foundation School
École de Formation Hébraïque
בית ספר היסוד העברי

2 Hope Drive | Dollard-des-Ormeaux, QC | H9A 2V5
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Anti-bullying and Anti-Violence Prevention and Intervention Plan

Guide for parents



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What is bullying?

The Ministry of Education defines bullying as follows: any repetitive direct or indirect behavior, comment, act, or gesture whether deliberate or not, including in cyberspace, which occurs in a context characterized by a power imbalance between the persons involved and which has the effect of creating feelings of distress and of injuring, oppressing or ostracizing.

The school's role and responsibilities?

In order to comply with its legal obligations in regards to preventing acts of bullying and violence, our establishment has equipped itself with an anti-bullying and anti-violence prevention plan which we invite you to consult.

We have a zero tolerance policy when it comes to students bullying others, whether in person or online. We would like our students to learn from their actions and understand the rules required to live in society. As well, an act of bullying or violence has consequences and can even result in expulsion. Please refer to our school's code of conduct.

As a parent, you are the first person in your child's life to instill the values of respect and tolerance. Therefore, your cooperation is necessary in order to help a victim as well as enable a bully to change his / her behavior. Denial will not resolve a problematic situation; for this reason, we are counting on your cooperation to look at the facts and take action to support your child, whether they are a victim, witness or bully.

Bullying occurs in every social, cultural and economic context, as does many other forms of violence. Therefore, it is a complex issue with multiple origins.



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What are the different types of bullying?

Bullying can take many forms, such as:

- Physical: hitting, punching, pushing, stealing or breaking personal effects
- Verbal or psychological: insults, threats, humiliation and sexist, racist or homophobic comments
- Social: rejection, exclusion from a group or spreading gossip and rumors
- Sexual: harassment, touching, gestures and relations without consent
- Electronic (commonly known as cyberbullying): Spreading rumors and hurtful comments by email, cell phone, text messages and through social media.

Multiple forms of bullying have been described in our policy in order to enable you to understand what your child might be experiencing.

Although various types of bullying exist, the following criteria can help you determine whether a situation should be considered an act of bullying:

- Power imbalance
- Harmful intent
- Feelings of distress felt by the victim of bullying
- Repeated acts of bullying during a given period

Bullying is not a trivial conflict between two individuals; it is an act of aggression. Thus, pushing, fighting, an insult or even an isolated threat is not necessarily bullying. They are, however, incidents that may require an intervention.

Cyberbullying is a type of bullying that occurs online with certain particularities depending on the type of media used:

- The bully can remain anonymous.
- The bully can use a fake identity.
- Bullying can occur from anywhere and at any time.
- Bullying can present itself in many forms within cyberspace.
- The ability to spread words and images is immediate and unlimited.
- In front of a screen, bullies show less restraint than face to face with their victim.



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How to help my child deal with bullying and violence?

Working with us to help your child or adolescent end bullying, is leading by example and clearly stating that bullying is reprehensible and reporting it is courageous and honorable.

A parent can help their child, of any age, by encouraging them to speak out and by giving them the following advice:

- Walk away from the situation.
- Do not hit back and do not respond verbally or by email.
- Report the incident to an adult – a member of the administration or personnel, a member of your family, a supervisor or the school's Social Development Educator.
- Talk about it with your siblings or parents to avoid feeling isolated.
- Find a friend to accompany you in situations that make you feel unsafe.
- Contact the Kids Help Phone at 1 800 668-6868 or visit their website <https://kidshelpphone.ca/>
- Reinforce the **WITS** program used at Hebrew Foundation School.



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What to do if my child is a witness to bullying?

Everyone can help prevent an act of bullying. In most cases, these acts take place in front of witnesses who avoid intervening out of fear of becoming the next target or aggravating the situation for the victim.

You can help your child understand that bullying is unacceptable and that reporting it to an adult can contribute to ending the problem.

"...in many cases, witnesses are an important part of the solution." Here is how:

- If you get involved, others will follow. Most young people disapprove of bullying; they simply do not want to be the first to take action. Please remember: intervene only if it is safe to do so.
- Sometimes, children are more successful than adults in convincing their peers to stop bullying. Simply by speaking out, you can greatly influence the situation.
- If more people take action against bullying, the school and community will be safer for everyone.



What to do if I witness bullying?

Here are ways to end bullying:

- Intervene: It is not always easy, but you can take action against bullying while it is happening. Create a diversion by saying that a teacher is on their way (even if it is false), ask the bully to stop or encourage everyone around you to leave the area.
- Provide a way out: approach the victim and ask if everything is ok. Invite the victim to leave the area with you.
- Discuss with the bully: if it is safe, discuss in private with the bully. Explain that such behaviour is unacceptable.
- Report the incident to someone: Reporting the situation to a teacher, a staff member or a trustworthy adult. If a physical aggression occurs, do not hesitate to call the police or emergency services (911). Confiding in one single person can keep everyone safe.
- Offer support: Following an incident, ask the victim if they are ok and remind them that they are not responsible for the incident. (Kids Help Phone)

Keep an eye out for the following:

Students that witness acts of bullying may:

- Feel anger, shame, guilt or powerlessness.
- Fear becoming a target or being associated with the victim, the bully or the act of bullying.
- Worry about being seen as an informer.
- In certain cases, over a long period of time, a witness may display similar side effects as victims.
- Actively participate in the act of bullying alongside the bully (active participating witness).
- Participate as an active spectator by laughing or encouraging the bully (active supporting witness).
- Support the bully indirectly by refusing to intervene or remaining passive (passive supporting witness).
- Help the victim by requesting the assistance of an adult (indirect defending witness).
- Help the victim directly by intervening against the bully (direct defending witness).



How to know if my child is a victim of Bullying?

A little girl may not know the definition of « bullying » but she does understand if someone is mean, hurtful, makes her feel sad or scared. She might not say anything out of fear that the situation might worsen.

Your child may not admit he / she is a victim of bullying or might refer to it as simply teasing. Older children often prefer dealing with their problems themselves as they might feel embarrassed by a parent getting involved.

Even though your child does not talk about bullying, certain signs can be revealing. Rather than wait for them to initiate a conversation about it, look for different clues, such as a change in behaviour, attitude or appearance.

Watch out for the following clues:

Students that are victims of bullying may:

- Seem more sensitive, shy, reserved or nervous than others
- Be perceived as different from the rest of the group due to certain aspects (attitude, specific physical traits, cultural group, physical or intellectual handicap, academic difficulties, etc.)
- Exhibit a submissive or passive behaviour or might withdraw themselves from any conflict
- Not have close any friends in school
- Seem demanding and seek the presence of adults
- Display signs of injuries or pain and complain of headaches or stomach aches
- Arrive in class or back home with torn clothes and damaged personal effects
- Exhibit sadness, depression or unhappiness
- Be unmotivated by their schoolwork or their academic results may suffer
- Have mood swings, feelings of anger, fear, shame, doubt or guilt
- Display anxiety, solitude, isolation, withdrawal, lack of self-esteem, loss of appetite or sleep disturbances
- Deny the situation, make efforts to hide the effects, search for a new friend group or flee to the world of books
- Be tardy, absent, quit school or take detours to get to school



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- Accept the role as victim, have suicidal thoughts or display violent behaviour.

Victims of bullying may lose all willingness to attend school, cry or feel sick on school days. They may refuse to participate in any activities or social events with other students. They may lose money or personal objects, come home with torn clothes or damaged personal effects and give an incoherent explanation.

Teenagers that are victims of bullying or harassment may begin talking about dropping out of school or avoiding activities with other students.



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What to do if your child is a victim of bullying?

First of all, the bullying must end.

Here are some helpful tips:

- Listen to your child and explain that they have the right to safety.
- Establish the facts with detail and precision. If possible, write down everything that happened and when it happened.
- Help your child understand the distinction between “telling on someone” or “tattling” and reporting an incident. Explain that reporting an incident requires courage and the objective is not to cause problems for another student but to protect all students.
- Make an appointment with the school’s Social Development Educator.
- As difficult as it may be, remain calm in order to help your child plan a course of action.
- Stay on course. Monitor your child’s behaviour. Prepare a follow up of the different steps agreed upon during the meetings to end the bullying.
- Contact the police if the bullying is considered a criminal act, like assault, or if there was a weapon used or if your child is being threatened in the community rather than at school.
- Furthermore, work on building your child’s self-confidence in order to facilitate pleasant social interactions and development.

Our recommendations:

- Develop your child’s strength and talents in order to increase his / her self-esteem.
- Enroll your child in activities that will improve his / her body image.
- Encourage connecting with others, leading to new friendships.
- Help find ways to increase your child’s autonomy.
- Avoid overprotecting your child and resolving the problem for them.
- Discuss with your child’s teachers and the school Administration.



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Is it possible that my child is a bully?

This may be difficult to accept but it is possible.

Children that physically bully others may come home with bruises, scratches or torn clothes. They may have extra spending money or items they usually cannot afford. They may also speak harshly about other students.

Children that bully may also do so at home. Observe and listen within your own household. Are there signs that your child is being bullied by their sibling?

Watch out for the following clues:

Children that bully others:

- Have limited abilities in conflict resolution, communication and expression.
- Often misinterpret social information, assume others have hostile intentions towards them or wrongly perceive hostility
- Need to dominate
- Lack feelings of remorse, compassion or empathy
- Believe aggression is the best solution for resolving conflicts
- Display a false image self-assurance or self-esteem
- Enjoy a “negative” leader status. They are at risk for dropping out of school
- Are at risk for developing long term mental health or social adaptation issues (drug or alcohol addiction, delinquency, conjugal violence, etc.)
- May develop better strategies or improved behaviour if the bullying issue is resolved quickly

Children may develop a bullying behaviour over time as a result of major changes, an important loss or disappointment.

Many bullies claim to have been bullied themselves or excluded by their peers. Their behaviour can be caused by seeking vengeance, enjoyment or stress relief. Peer pressure is also listed as a reason for bullying.



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Other aspects – child's age, level of cognitive and social development, ability to understand the situation and the consequences as well as inability to feel empathy – should be considered in determining if a situation is actually bullying or not and to ensure an appropriate intervention.

Lastly, a large number of students can become bullies, particularly in a group setting. Bullying creates a negative social component as it impacts the victim's social interactions and relationships. Acts of bullying are sometimes fueled by interactions in a group setting.

What to do if your child is a bully?

An effective way to discourage bullying is leading by example and showing how to overcome difficulties without exercising power or using aggression. Moreover, it is extremely important to explain bullying to our children. Describe the different types of bullying and explain why it is hurtful and damaging. Ensure that your children understand that bullying is reprehensible and completely unacceptable.

Take the situation seriously. It is important that your child is accountable for their behaviour.

Here are a few steps to take:

- Apply rules of conduct with consistency and logic
- Learn to reinforce positive behaviour
- Keep a close eye on friends
- Participate in activities with your children



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What are the current changes in how schools deal with bullying?

Teaching establishments have a legal obligation to intervene. They must end any inappropriate or disrespectful behaviour creating a negative effect on the school climate. This includes bullying, racist or sexist comments, or vandalism.

All staff, students and parents must report any act of bullying or violence to the school Administration or Social Development Director.

The person in charge will receive the report and proceed with an investigation to determine the following:

- a) The nature of the act in which the student was harmed, by meeting with the student or the student and their parent(s)
- b) The harm suffered by the student
- c) The measures taken to ensure the students safety

Once the victim's safety is guaranteed, the bully's parent(s) will be contacted and informed of the following:

- a) The nature of the act in which their child participated
- b) The harm he / she has caused
- c) The measures implemented in order to ensure the actions are not repeated
- d) The disciplinary measures for any repeated behaviour in the future

If deemed necessary, the Administration will contact the parent(s) of the children that witnessed the acts of bullying or violence.



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Complete confidentiality is a priority when dealing with any incident. The objective is to end acts of bullying and violence as opposed to putting bullies in the spotlight.

The school commits itself to respond within 24 hours to any request for protection following a complaint, to meet with the student and their parent(s) and to take immediate corrective measures.

The school commits itself to respond within 5 days to any request for an investigation regarding a problematic situation.

The complainant or their parent(s) can contact the Hebrew Foundation School Administration, at any time, at 514.684.6270 or by e-mail at hebrewfoundation@hfs.qc.ca



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References

This document was written from two main documents which include:

Bullying – we can all help stop it! A Guide for Parents of Elementary and Secondary School Students, Spring 2013, Ontario Ministry of Education

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/multi/english/BullyingEN.pdf>

Fighting Bullying and Violence in the Schools, Violence in the schools: Let's work on it together! Ministère de l'Éducation, Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur

<http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/en/contenus-communs/school-administrators-public-and-private-schools/bullying-and-violence-in-the-schools/>

Jasmin Roy Sophie Desmarais Foundation: <https://fondationjasminroy.com/en/>

La fondation du programme DIRE/WITS Program Foundation: <https://witsprogram.ca/>

Kids Help Phone: <https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-info/bystander-what-do-if-you-witness-bullying/>