



# BULLYING PREVENTION

## POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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## **BULLYING PREVENTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

This booklet contains our school policy, and details the roles and responsibilities of all adults (administration, teachers, support staff, parents) and students in understanding and preventing bullying.

The content of this booklet is also posted on the school website at (<http://schoolweb.tdsb.on.ca/brian>) and is available in hard copy upon request.

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## **PART A: BULLYING PREVENTION POLICIES**

**All individuals – children and adults – have the right to feel safe and respected in their environment, and we believe it is the responsibility of all individuals to treat others in a safe and respectful manner.**

The Ontario Ministry of Education, the Toronto District School Board and Brian Public School have all established policies and procedures to prevent bullying and intervene in cases where it occurs.

### **Ontario Ministry of Education Policy on Bullying Prevention and Intervention**

The Ontario Ministry of Education requires all school boards and schools to have policies that ensure school safety, including Codes of Conduct, Bullying Prevention and Intervention policies, and disciplinary approaches that are progressive and promote positive student behaviour. Schools that have bullying prevention and intervention strategies foster a positive learning and teaching environment that supports academic achievement for all students and that helps students reach their full potential”.

The policy requires that school boards have plans in place that include the following components:

1. Policy statement on bullying prevention.
2. Ministry definition of bullying.
3. Prevention strategies.
4. Intervention strategies.
5. Training strategies for members of the school community.
6. Communication and outreach strategies.
7. Monitoring and review procedures.

The policy requires that schools adopt the Ministry policy statement, and develop plans that include items #2 to 7 as listed above.

**Furthermore, The Government of Ontario has passed amendments to the Education Act to further strengthen the legislation when it comes to bullying (Bill 13).**

## Toronto District School Board Policy

### *Safe and Caring Schools*

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) provides all schools with a framework within which to develop Codes of Conduct, Bullying Prevention and Intervention policies, and progressive and positive approaches to student discipline.

### *Equity*

In addition, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) Equity Foundation Statement recognizes that certain groups in our society are treated inequitably because of individual and systemic biases related to race, colour, ability, culture, ethnicity, linguistic origin, socio-economic class, age, ancestry, nationality, place of origin, religion, faith, gender, sex, sexual orientation, family status, and marital status.

The TDSB is committed to ensuring that fairness, equity, and inclusion are essential principles of our school system and are integrated into all our policies, programs, operations, and practices.

### *Character Education*

The TDSB actively promotes the following positive character attributes: *respect, responsibility, empathy, kindness and caring, teamwork, fairness, honesty, co-operation, integrity, and perseverance*. All schools in the TDSB celebrate these traits through a variety of character education programs.

## École Brian Public School

### *Code of Conduct*

Brian has developed a Code of Conduct which is based on every student's right to learn in an atmosphere of SAFETY, RESPECT, AND CARING, and each student's obligation to treat others and their environment in a manner that is SAFE, RESPECTFUL, CARING AND RESPONSIBLE. The Code is the articulation of the beliefs of the staff, parents and students on the manner in which daily interactions at Brian are conducted. It is our expectation that all adults will model and teach these values.

The Code of Conduct includes detailed rules and expectations designed to ensure safety, respect and responsibility in all aspects of our busy school life: classroom activities, playground activities, line-ups, lunch routines, assemblies, concerts, athletic events and excursions.

### *Let's Stop the Bullying*

This resource consists of strategies to enhance current anti-bullying practices and develop a school-wide plan to address bullying behaviours, including direct responses to bullying situations. Teachers are provided grade specific lesson plans to help students learn to understand the bullying problem, reflect upon their own attitudes and change their behaviours toward peers. The program is designed to promote a sense of belonging among students, and teach them how and when to seek help from adults and other children.

### *Conflict Resolution*

*Second Step* is another component of the character education program that will be deployed at Brian. Teachers will use it along with other resources to provide the foundation for developing in students the ability to form kind, respectful and harmonious relationships. The main components of the program are Empathy, Impulse Control and Anger Management.

The program is called *Second Step* because it is based on the belief that parents represent the first step in giving their children the skills to build positive relationships. A shared understanding between parents and the school of the importance of these skills and approaches to developing them is crucial to an effective bullying prevention program.

### *Peer Mediators*

In addition, a select number of students will be trained and supported in acting as Peer Mediators for small conflicts that can occur in the school yard. These students have clear instructions on how to intervene, and when to refer situations to a teacher or an administrator, specifically any incidence of bullying.

### *Progressive Discipline*

When discipline is imposed, it is done in a step-by-step approach, it takes mitigating factors into account and it is positive. In accordance with Ministry and Board policy, schools practise **progressive discipline** to promote positive student behaviour.

*“Progressive discipline is a whole school approach that utilizes a continuum of interventions, supports and consequences that include opportunities for reinforcing positive behaviour while helping students make good choices. When inappropriate behaviour occurs, disciplinary measures should be applied within a framework that shifts the focus: from solely punitive to both corrective and supportive.”*

Ontario Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 145

## PART B: WHAT IS BULLYING?

### Definition of Bullying

“Bullying is typically a form of repeated, persistent, and aggressive behaviour directed at an individual or individuals that is intended to cause (or should be known to cause) fear and stress and/or harm to another person’s body, feelings, self-esteem, or reputation. 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, and race.

Bullying is a dynamic of unhealthy interaction that can take many forms. It can be physical (e.g., hitting, pushing, tripping), verbal (e.g., name calling, mocking, or making sexist, racist, or homophobic comments), social (e.g., excluding others from a group, spreading gossip or rumours). It may also occur through the use of technology (e.g., spreading rumours, images, or hurtful comments through the use of e-mail, cellphones, text messaging, internet websites, or other technology).”

*(Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum 144, p.3)*

Bill 13 states the following:

*(1) Subsection 1 (1) of the Education Act is amended by adding the following definition:*

*“bullying” means repeated and aggressive behaviour by a pupil where,*

*(a) the behaviour is intended by the pupil to cause, or the pupil ought to know that the behaviour would be likely to cause, harm, fear or distress to another individual, including psychological harm or harm to the individual’s reputation, and*

*(b) the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the pupil and the individual based on factors such as size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, race, disability or the receipt of special education; (“intimidation”)*

*(2) Section 1 of the Act is amended by adding the following subsection:*

*Bullying*

*(1.0.0.1) For the purposes of the definition of “bullying” in subsection (1), behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.*

Boys and girls both bully. All types of bullying occur among girls and boys, with some differences in emphasis. Bullying among boys can be more physical, and centred on trying to be superior in activities that are valued by peers, such as sports, games or being “cool”. Bullying among girls is generally more verbal and relational, and is centred on trying to dominate a social group through the use of words and relationships. Any type of bullying can cause long-term damage if not stopped.

## Conflict

Bullying is different from a conflict. Conflict is a misunderstanding between two individuals or groups, and is a common occurrence, especially in a busy and crowded school (e.g., two soccer teams disagree on whether someone scored or not; two friends want to play different games). Conflicts can be serious, but should not cause more than moderate and temporary upset. The Peer Mediators (on duty at every recess) and adult supervisors are available to help students resolve conflicts. Bullying is different from occasional “meanness” or aggressive behaviour. Meanness is never acceptable, but it is important to remember that everybody can have a bad day, and take their bad feelings out by hurting the people around them. This kind of meanness can become bullying if it becomes deliberate and continues over time.

The most common forms of bullying in schools, both among boys and girls, are name calling and teasing, and being ignored and left out.

## Teasing vs Taunting & Mocking

It is important to note the difference between “innocent teasing” and “taunting or mocking”. As Barbara Coloroso<sup>1</sup> has pointed out, **teasing** is innocent and good natured - it is often clever and lighthearted and designed to make both parties laugh. The “teaser and person teased” could easily swap roles. It is immediately discontinued when the person teased becomes upset or objects to the teasing.

**Taunting or mocking** is intended to hurt - it is humiliating and cruel, often disguising demeaning comments as jokes. The teaser does not stop when the person teased is hurt - in fact it often continues and worsens. Laughter is clearly **at the expense** of the person teased, with no regard for his/her feelings.

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<sup>1</sup> Author **Barbara Coloroso** has written books on parenting, including *The Bully, The Bullied and the Bystander*, and *Kids Are Worth It!*

## Types of bullying

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### **Social Bullying**

- Verbal insults: unfair criticism, name calling, taunting, mocking, humiliating
  - Threatening and obscene gestures
  - Sexist, racist, homophobic messages
  - Spreading malicious rumours or gossip through the use of telephone, e-mail, text messages, internet sites or other technology
  - Telling secrets
  - Anonymous messages in any paper or electronic form
  - Disrespectful comments
  - Persuading others to participate in bullying (getting others to be on your side)
  - Giggling or laughing behind someone's back
  - Isolating
  - Excluding
  - Ignoring
- 

### **Physical Bullying**

- Hitting, throwing things, tripping, kicking, pushing, shoving, pulling, spitting
  - Using a weapon\*
  - Hiding, damaging or grabbing belongings and refusing to return them
  - Grabbing other people's clothing
  - Getting another person to physically hurt someone
  - Threatening violence
  - Inappropriate touching
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\*A 'weapon' is any object that can be hurtful used to cause harm. In elementary schools, this could include a pin or a pair of scissors.

## The Bully, the Target and the Bystander

*Children who bully* have been observed to have a higher than average need to dominate, to win control over others and to have attention centered on themselves. They tend to have relatively poor impulse control and empathy, and might show aggressiveness. They have a limited ability to resolve conflicts, to feel empathy and to take responsibility for their actions. *Children who are targets of bullying* tend to be viewed or view themselves as weaker or different in some way. They may show anxiety and be relatively ill-equipped in social skills that allow them to form and sustain relationships. They appear isolated and vulnerable, and are not able to react assertively to being the object of bullying.



By far the largest group is the *bystanders* and their behaviour is key to bullying prevention. These children are not directly involved and tend to provide an audience for bullies. They may like or enjoy the bullies' behaviour, they may be afraid they will be the next target, or they may not be equipped with the skills to intervene. However, research clearly indicates that bullying stops when adult or peer bystanders intervene.

Bullying is not very common at Brian. However it does exist at the school. The most frequent form, both for boys and girls, is social bullying, with some physical bullying mainly among boys. It takes place mainly in the playground, hallways, stairwells, washrooms - unstructured situations with a relatively small adult presence. The rate of intervention and reporting needs to improve as research and experience indicates that they are key to preventing bullying. The surveys show that boys tend to report bullying less than girls do. Adult actions and interventions need to focus on ensuring that students clearly understand the nature of bullying and its negative effects, and develop effective ways of intervening and reporting to adults. Students need to be explicitly taught how to react in situations where adult presence is not as great.

## **PART C: OVERVIEW OF ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

At Brian, we firmly believe that it is the responsibility of everyone in the school - staff, parents and volunteers, and students - to create an atmosphere that does not allow bullying. Staff and parents are aware that the school exists in a wider culture (video games, magazines, TV, pop music and advertising) that can have both a positive and a negative influence on our children. All adults involved in our students' lives must work as conscientiously as possible to ensure that, at Brian, correct social conduct is identified, taught and monitored in every aspect of school life. Specifically, this involves: teaching and modeling respectful behaviour, teaching the nature and negative impact of bullying, supervising students actively, and intervening effectively when bullying occurs. As bullying occurs most where there is little or no supervision, effective monitoring and intervention are the best tools for its reduction.

Students for their part are at the front lines of anti-bullying and need to learn how to react when they are in the presence of bullying. As they are young, inexperienced and may be conflicted in their loyalties to friends and their developing sense of justice, it is crucial they understand what bullying is, and how they should react to it.

The table below outlines the key responsibilities of all stakeholders in bullying prevention.

Administration	Teaching Staff	Parents & Volunteers	Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Develop bullying prevention policy and procedures with staff, parents and students.</li> <li>•Communicate to the community the content and importance of the policy and procedures</li> <li>•Model the procedures outlined</li> <li>•Provide staff with professional development and materials,</li> <li>•Teach students how to recognize bullying and how to stand up to it on a daily basis,</li> <li>•Monitor appropriate supervision and intervention by all adults on a daily basis,</li> <li>•Inform all volunteers about the policy and procedures</li> <li>•Deal with specific bullying incidents as needed, including reporting and discipline.</li> <li>•Review the effectiveness of the policy and procedures regularly.</li> <li>•Keep an accessible collection of up-to-date resources in the library.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Help develop the policy and procedures</li> <li>•Use Let’s Stop the Bullying and Second Step to teach positive and respectful social relations in the school.</li> <li>•Maintain classroom rules of respectful behaviour, and review these frequently.</li> <li>•Teach students to recognize bullying and how to react to it.</li> <li>•Model the procedures outlined.</li> <li>•Supervise students actively.</li> <li>•Intervene immediately when they see a potential bullying situation.</li> <li>•Report to parents as needed.</li> <li>•Report to administration any issues of concern (including those reported by students, parents, or other volunteers).</li> <li>•Record incidents factually and confidentially.</li> </ul> <p><b>Support Staff (EAs, Office staff, Caretakers, Bus Drivers)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Assist administration and teachers in carrying out the above responsibilities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Lunchroom Supervisors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Supervise students actively.</li> <li>•Intervene immediately when they see a potential bullying situation.</li> <li>•Report to teachers and administration.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Assist with developing the policy and procedures</li> <li>•Read and understand the policy.</li> <li>•Encourage their children to understand and respect the policy</li> <li>•Model and support the policy and procedures when they volunteer at the school (including excursions).</li> <li>•Intervene in a positive manner to ensure respectful behaviour.</li> <li>•Report to administration or teachers any issues of concern.</li> </ul> <p><b>Volunteers &amp; Visitors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Read and understand the policy.</li> <li>•Report to the teacher or administration any issues of concern.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Always try their best to understand and respect the Brian Code of Conduct and Bullying Prevention Policy and Procedures</li> <li>•Pay attention to classroom lessons that teach how to recognize bullying and what to do if they are bullied or if they see someone being bullied.</li> <li>•React positively and assertively to incidents of bullying, using the skills and strategies taught by teachers and administration.</li> <li>•Report to an adult when their efforts to stop bullying are not successful, remembering that reporting is not getting someone ‘into trouble’, it is getting someone ‘out of trouble’.</li> </ul>

## PART D: STAFF ACTIONS

Character education, active supervision, prompt intervention and effective investigation by adults, administration, teachers, educational assistants and lunchroom supervisors, are the most effective methods of preventing bullying.

### Prevention

The following key strategies are used by staff at Brian to teach students at all grade levels how to prevent bullying. By emphasizing these messages, it is the expectation of staff that students will behave safely and respectfully towards each other even when adult presence is relatively small.

**Character Education:** Staff (mainly administration and teachers) use the character education program (Second Step and other materials), the contents of this booklet, as well as other resources to teach students the following critical lessons. The “Empathy” section of the Second Step curriculum is used, as is the school’s Code of Conduct, and the 10 positive Character attributes identified by the TDSB.

**Special Presentations and Assemblies:** The school, through the Bullying Prevention Committee, will regularly invite speakers and host special events, such as plays or movies, to review the importance of being aware of bullying and preventing it.

**Let’s Stop the Bullying/Second Step:** Teachers will provide students direct instruction on conflict resolution, and more particularly focus on empathy development. Instruction on what bullying consists of and the importance of preventing it should be included in that teaching in an age-appropriate way.

### Active supervision

Be in constant circulation with particular vigilance to higher risk activities, such as sports and competitive games, and locations such as isolated areas, washrooms and stairwells.

Approach individuals and small groups to remind them of the importance of safe and respectful behaviour. Be alert to the response from some children that they are “just playing”. Rough play is forbidden on school grounds as it can escalate to genuine conflict and result in injury.

Remain present or return frequently to any area where there are signs of rough play or signs of bullying, such as a child who seems isolated, or hurtful words or gestures being used.

## Intervention Key Steps

Approach quickly to stop the incident.

Calmly separate the parties involved.

Assess the situation.

### **If the situation seems minor:**

- Separate and get the full attention of all the students involved.
- Remind them of the need to treat each other with respect.
- Ensure that the caution has been effective by supervising closely and intervening again if necessary.
- Complete a **Minor Incident Office Reporting form** for each of the main students involved.

### **If the situation seems serious:**

- Immediately provide assistance to the student who appears to be hurt - escort to the office if necessary.
- Attempt to determine the nature of the problem and send all those involved to the office
- Complete a **Safe and Caring Schools Incident Reporting form** for each of the main students involved. Always list the names of any witnesses.

Addressing any situation in which bullying has occurred should always support the target/s of bullying and provide positive discipline for those who have bullied.

As always, it is a fundamental responsibility for any responsible adult in the school to keep any involved child's parents informed of bullying incidents.

## Investigation

### Key Steps

#### Information Gathering

Administration speaks separately to every student involved in the incident. Teachers will also try to do this, but it may not always be possible. Details are gathered from every individual's point of view in order to gain a full understanding of the overall context and of the particular incident. Being very clear and impartial are crucial to understanding and solving bullying situations. This information gathering is always done in the context of the Brian Bullying Prevention Policy - we all need to treat each other with respect, and we all need to be part of the solution when someone is not treated with respect.

Ensure the safety of students who say they have been bullied.

Gather additional information, interviewing students separately in the following order if possible:  
Those who say they have been hurt or bullied.  
Observers or bystanders.  
Those who have seemed to have hurt or bullied others.

Review the incident with each student in the context of the School's Code of Behaviour, and Board and Ministry guidelines.

Impose consequences as appropriate.

Contact parents of involved students as appropriate.

Follow up with staff, students and parents involved to prevent further incidents.

## **Meetings and On-going Counselling**

### *With individuals and small groups*

Teachers and administration will meet on a regular basis with students who feel they are being bullied, with those who are bullying or with active bystanders who need advice and encouragement on how to solve the problem. At these meetings, positive future directions are discussed: What are your strengths and interests? Who are the people you trust (your HELPING HAND -- see page 13)? How could you change your recess activities for the better? What other games could you play? What help do you need? What activities are you involved in the school? What activities would you like to be involved in?

### *With classes*

Teachers lead their class in a discussion of incidents, and review the classroom, school and playground safety rules as necessary. The content and the frequency of these class meetings will vary according to the grade level and the incidents involved - some classes will review safety in general terms, some will discuss individual actions and solutions. All discussions will focus on positive reinforcement and future directions.

### *The “No-Blame” Meeting*

Students who are being bullied, students who are bullying and bystanders are gathered together with an adult to build empathy. The adult states clearly that a member of the group is feeling unsafe or unhappy, and asks "what can you do to make things go better in this group?" All suggestions are valued; no blame is assigned to individuals; no specific behaviours are discussed - the emphasis is on feelings. Once the group comes up with suggestions, a plan is made, and the teacher (or administration) follows up with the group on a daily basis to ensure that a change is happening.

## **Imposition of Consequences**

See part G.

## PART E: STUDENT ACTIONS

### Prevention

#### Helping Hand

The “Helping Hand” is handed out at the beginning of each year and you are **ENTHUSIASTICALLY ENCOURAGED** to write down on the five fingers of the hand the names of at least five people that you can trust when you are in trouble or need help and support. These people can be classmates, friends, teachers, parents, other relatives, trusted adults - it would be a good idea to include at least 2 people who are in the school, and one of them should be an adult. If you have trouble identifying these people, talk to your parents, friends or teachers. If you can only come up with 2,3, or 4, that’s fine too!. Be sure that the people you have put on your **HELPING HAND** know about it so that they are ready to help you. Be sure to be there for the people who have put you on their **HELPING HAND**. You should all shake on it!

The **HELPING HAND** is your support system. Keep it in your agenda or in your desk or at home. **USE IT!** Talk things over with the people on your **HELPING HAND** whenever you have questions or concerns about how people treat each other at Brian.

Think seriously about the meaning of friendship

Remember every day that a good friend can **ALWAYS** be trusted to treat you with respect and kindness - be and seek that kind of friend! Be sure your true friends are on your helping hand and support each other. Play safely and respectfully!

## Intervention

### The Bystander

Many students at Brian will witness a bullying situation. It is important to learn to become a backbone bystander, rather than a “passive witness”.

*A backbone bystander:*

- stands beside the person who is being bullied
- uses a calm and firm voice to stand up to the bully (see next page)
- draws the student who is being bullied away from the problem into fun and safe activities
- draws other bystanders away
- does not show any approval of bullying - it is not funny, it is not cool
- helps the student who is being bullied to find someone on his/her Helping Hand or an older sibling
- reports to an adult
- remembers that Brian stands for SAFETY, RESPECT AND KINDNESS in every part of the building, in the playground and on excursions
- can put himself or herself into the situation of the person who is being hurt (the ability to do this is called EMPATHY)

We know that bullying stops when the bully loses his/her audience and backbone bystanders support the student who is being bullied.

*Some of the things a backbone bystander can tell the bully:*

- “Come on, that’s not fair”;
- “You don’t need to do that”;
- “It’s not funny”; It’s not cool”;

Some of the things a backbone bystander can tell the person being bullied:

- “Come on, you don’t need to put up with that”;
- “I know how you feel”;
- “Let’s go, let’s get out of here”;
- “Let’s find your friends OR come and play with my friends”.



*Here is what every student at Brian should do in order to be a backbone bystander:*

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>STEP 1</b> | Gain an understanding of what bullying is (class lessons and discussions).  |
| <b>STEP 2</b> | Be alert to incidents of bullying in the school-yard, hallways, lunch-rooms, buses or other areas where adult supervision is low. |
| <b>STEP 3</b> | Do not ignore or approve of bullying behaviour. Put yourself in the place of the person who is being bullied.                     |
| <b>STEP 4</b> | Use words to intervene to stop the bullying, but do not put yourself in a dangerous predicament.                                  |
| <b>STEP 5</b> | Report incidents of bullying to an adult immediately. Your report will be taken seriously and will be treated confidentially.     |
| <b>STEP 6</b> | Continue to be a "backbone bystander."  |

**Students must never use physical force, shouting or anger to stop a bullying situation.**

If you can't solve the situation by standing with the person who is being bullied, calmly asking the person who is bullying to stop, and taking the person who is being bullied and other bystanders away from the situation, then go for help to a teacher, lunchroom supervisor, another adult - they are always there to help - you are never alone.

Never put yourself in a situation where you might get hurt.

### **Walking Away and Ignoring**

Walking away from or ignoring a bullying situation are not very good solutions, but you may need to use them from time to time. As you get to know how to recognize bullying and how to be a "backbone bystander", you will get better at finding the right words to stop bullying. You may find that supporting a student who is being targeted - by just being there and showing you do not appreciate what is going on - will make the bullying stop. But there may be times when walking away or ignoring are the right thing to do for that moment. If a bully is taunting or teasing a student and you can't stop it, walk away with the student who is being targeted; encourage others to walk away too - the bully is much more likely to stop if he/she does not have an appreciative audience! Then report to an adult, and talk it over with the students and the adults involved until a solution is found. Walking away is a temporary solution only.

## Report to an adult

Always report to an adult either right away because the situation is too serious for you to handle OR after you have handled it. Bullying is serious - adults need to be informed about it.

You may think that the bully will “get back at you” or that people will think you “tattled”.

### *Some Important Thoughts:*

- it is not right to stand by and let someone get hurt, so you have to do something;
- if you are really nervous and scared, tell an adult on your Helping Hand, and figure out a way so that you can help the person who is being bullied without being identified;
- showing strength and confidence is very powerful - much more powerful than you may think - bullies usually back down
- experience shows that, in elementary schools, threats to “get back at” someone almost never happen

### *The Difference Between “Reporting” and “Tattling”:*

**Students must report on a situation in which they think someone is being bullied.** It is an important responsibility and will lead to a solution. The person who is being bullied is probably feeling hurt and unhappy (maybe they feel as if they are “in trouble” of some kind). Once you become aware of this, you must do your very best to be his or her BACKBONE BYSTANDER.

You are **reporting**. You are not **tattling**. You are doing the right thing by helping the person who is being bullied to get “out of trouble”, and you are NOT getting the person who is doing the bullying “into trouble”! All you are doing is finding someone and asking them, “I need your help!”

Remember, a person who bullies is not a “bad person”, but he/she is choosing some disrespectful ways to treat others and that needs to be changed. If you help everybody find different - and BETTER - ways to relate to each other, you are being part of the solution. You’re getting everyone “out of trouble”!

The bystander’s role is essential to helping the person being bullied as often he or she won’t report because he or she is afraid or embarrassed.

### *Giving Good Information:*

- **Where** and **when** the bullying happens (it can help everybody in stopping it)
  - Does it happen mainly during recess?
  - Does it happen mainly when adults are not around?
  - Does it happen in the hallways or washrooms?
- **What kind** of bullying is it (physical or emotional)?
- **How often** is it happening?
- **How** is the person feeling?
- Can you think of a **cause** behind why the person is being bullied?
- Can you think of any **ways that this person could change** some of the things they do in order to stop the bullying?
- Do you **feel you could talk to the bully** to explain that he/ she is being mean and disrespectful?

### **The Bullied**

If you find yourself being the target of bullying, remain calm, and find the people in the school that you trust to help, usually your teacher, a supervisor and the school principal or vice-principal. They will go over some ways that you can lessen the power the bully will try to have over you.

You should also always let your parents know what has happened to you and what you and your teacher have talked about to solve the problem. Usually, the teacher or the administration will have called your parents to let them know as well, but it is important you do talk to them as well so they hear things in your own words. The school will speak to everyone involved, and it is very important you tell the adult investigating everything you know about how the bullying started, what happened next and how you reacted to it.

The best way to make sure the bullying will end is to report it, and work with your friends, teachers and parents to overcome the problem.

### **The Bully**

Some Brian students will find themselves in the situation where they are bullying others, or they are seen as bullying others. If you find yourself in this challenging situation, you need to think carefully about what you are doing and why you are doing it... Try to look at your actions through that person's point of view, and if you can see that they might feel hurt, then you need to stop what you're doing.

*Here are some suggestions to help you deal with this difficult situation:*

- be sure you start every school year with your HELPING HAND? filled out with the names of 5 people (adults or students - at least two at the school) that you can count on when you feel you are in trouble.
- think about your own actions, look at the chart on the different types of bullying in this Bullying Prevention Booklet, and honestly think about whether you might be doing some bullying.
- try to think about the situation from the point of view of the person who seems to be getting hurt by your actions
- discuss with your friends and trusted adults how your actions are being seen, and how you could change them so that everybody - including you - will feel safe and respected.

*Other temporary solutions are:*

- humour
- not reacting to being provoked or “having your buttons pushed”.

## **PART F: PARENT ACTIONS**

### **Prevention**

We are all aware that many children rarely experience bullying, while others seem to be disproportionately targeted. In many ways, your child’s vulnerability to bullying will be determined by the way he or she reacts to it: the more emotional the reaction, the more empowering this is to the bully.

While “bully-proofing” your child may not entirely eliminate all bullying situations, but it will better prepare him or her to deal with it when it occurs and minimize its impact.

On the next pages are a few tips<sup>2</sup>:

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from an Effective Ways to Bully-Proof Your Child by Linday Hutton on [www.familyeducation.com](http://www.familyeducation.com)

**1. Talk About Bullying Early and Often:** Raise the topic of bullying with your child early on. Talk to him or her about why bullying is wrong, and instill in your child the importance of self-confidence and assertiveness. Be sure to address the various ways bullying can take form - social as well as physical.

Don't wait until a situation arises before talking to your child about who to turn to for help. Role play what she should say to an adult if he or she is being bullied. Help him or her visualize a situation and what he or she would do if it happened. Practising these tactics at school and at home will help make his or her reactions to a real situation more automatic, and will make your child feel more comfortable asking for help.

**2. Encourage Friendships:** Remember the saying "strength in numbers"? It applies to bullies as well. Establishing a solid core group of friends will give your child confidence and help to keep him from being singled out. Encourage your child to invite friends over for face-to-face interactions, instead of just online communication. This will build his social skills and strengthen his friendships.

**3. Know School Policies:** Make sure you know your child's school policies on bullying (obviously, you are doing this by reading this booklet). Talk to your child's teacher about how bullying is handled in your child's classroom, and voice any concerns you have.

**4. Practise Using Humor:** This tactic usually works best for older children. Using humor to ward off the bully's insult will often catch the bully off-guard and help diffuse the situation. Help your child practise this approach by trading witty comebacks--this will help him come up with a humorous reaction quickly and easily. However, make sure that the humor does not encourage insulting the bully back--this won't do much to teach your child that the bully's behaviour is wrong.

**5. Teach Assertiveness:** Having the courage to look a bully in the eye and stand up to him is a very effective anti-bullying tactic, but it's also one that takes practice. Work with your child at home to help her learn to be assertive. Practise different situations, and help him or her think of ways she can stand up for him or herself in each one. This tactic can be very effective, but shouldn't be used in cases of severe bullying or if there is the potential for your child to get hurt.

**6. Encourage Your Child to Walk Away with Confidence:**

There is a difference between walking away with confidence, and walking away in fear. Teach your child to disengage from the bully and to walk away with an air of self-respect. If the bully feels he or she can't get to your child, he or she will likely give up.

Learning to walk away takes courage and isn't easy, so practising this tactic at home is helpful. Using a line such as, "I don't care what you're saying about me, I have better things to do with my time" is a good way to help convey your message to the bully.

**7. Monitor Internet and Phone Use:** The anonymity of the Internet makes cyberbullying a modern day threat. To help keep your child from being bullied online, keep all computers in a common area of your house and monitor his or her Internet use. Tell your child not to accept any texts, instant messages or friend requests from people he or she doesn't know. If your child does receive a harassing message or email, teach him or her not to reply or play into it, and to tell you right away. The following site has some useful information on proper social media use for children: <http://www.parenting.com/gallery/social-media-monitoring-kids?pnid=319649>

**8. Be Available:** Sometimes a situation becomes more than your child can handle. In situations like this, it is essential your child knows he or she can and must come to you and to a teacher for help.

If your child is afraid of "tattling," explain to her the difference between telling on someone merely to get them in trouble and telling an adult about a harmful situation.

## Intervention

### Recommended Actions for Parents Who Are Concerned That Their Child Is Being Bullied

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listen carefully to your child.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reassure him or her that the situation will be resolved.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Give specific advice based on the information in this booklet, for instance, help your child recognize whether they are in conflict with another student or in a bullying situation.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Help your child understand what steps the school will take to resolve the situation.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tell your child to speak to their teacher if they haven't already done so.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Never contact another involved child's parents directly. This is the school's responsibility.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Never speak directly to another involved child directly. This is also the school's responsibility.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contact both your child's teacher and the school's administration to follow up.</li></ul>

## Recommended Actions for Parents Who Are Concerned That Their Child Is Bullying Others<sup>3</sup>

- **Listen. Don't Judge.** Talk with your child, and find out what's going on. Are her or his friends also bullying? Is your child struggling with an issue or perhaps a disability? Start by listening and not judging.
- **Teach empathy, respect, and compassion.** Try to understand your child's feelings and talk about what the victim might be experiencing. Is your child aware of the impact of the behaviour?
- **Draw Clear Boundaries.** Make your expectations and the consequences for violating them clear. Let your child know that bullying is never acceptable and that the consequences, such as loss of privileges or a face-to-face apology to the victim, will be enforced.
- **Teach by example.** Model nonviolent behaviour, practice constructive resolution of difficult situations, and give positive feedback when you notice healthy choices.
- **Show Love and Support.** Offer and seek support for your child. Behaviour change will take time. Give your child love and support, even if you are angry and upset, and seek out the help of others who can partner with you in your efforts to put a stop to the bullying.

If your child is bullying other kids, it's important to step in and teach your child proper ways to behave with others. While her or his bullying may not be very harmful right now, it can escalate quickly and turn into something much more difficult to deal with. Regardless of the intensity of your child's bullying, it is hurting others and needs to be stopped soon.

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<sup>3</sup> Adapted from <http://www.parentfurther.com/high-risk-behaviours/bullying/what-should-i-do-if-my-child-bully>



## **PART G: CONSEQUENCES**

The purpose of the Brian Code of Conduct and Bullying Prevention Policy/Procedures is to build an environment in which all members of the community are committed to safety, respect and responsibility. Within this context, incidents of inappropriate behaviour are addressed through early and on-going intervention. The focus is always for the students to learn from the choices they have made, and relies on parental awareness and involvement.

In the case of bullying, and applying the principles of progressive discipline, the short-term consequences would include:

- meeting the parents of the student to discuss possible causes of the behaviour and future solutions
- withdrawal from recess or other privileges - time to be determined according to circumstances
- apology and reparation
- suspension - if the incident is sufficiently serious

In the longer term, any students involved in a bullying situation would be monitored carefully, and teachers and administration would continue to check on a regular basis until it is determined that the bullying has stopped. Supervision and intervention by all adults in the school to prevent bullying is a daily responsibility.

It may also be recommended that either the bullying and bullied student would be helped by being referred in coordination with their parents to the TDSB's Student Support Services social worker.

Finally, if all other interventions have failed and the bullying continues, as per Bill 13 (proposed), the consequences of bullying may escalate to expulsion.

## **PART H: MONITORING AND REVIEWING POLICY**

Feedback on our Bullying Prevention Policy and Procedures is welcome at any time to the school administration or to the Chair of School Council. The Caring and Safe Schools Committee which is responsible for the content of this guide meets to discuss:

- the most effective ways of implementing the policy and procedures
- feedback received
- issues as they arise
- planning bullying prevention assemblies and school-wide campaigns

The policy and procedures booklet will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by the Committee and the school's administration and staff, and updated as changes in practice and policy dictate.

## PART I: RESOURCES FOR PARENTS, STAFF AND STUDENTS

### Blogs & Websites

*Effective Ways to Bully-Proof Your Child* by Lindsay Hutton

<http://life.familyeducation.com/bully-proof/safety/67749.html?page=1>

*What If My Child Is a Bully?*

<http://www.parentfurther.com/high-risk-behaviours/bullying/what-should-i-do-if-my-child-bully>

*Ontario Ministry of Education Registry of Resources for Safe and Inclusive Schools*

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/bullyprevention/registry.html>

### Books

*The Anti-Bullying and Teasing Book For Preschool Classrooms*, Barbara Sprung, Merle Froschl, Dr. Blythe Hinitz, Gryphon House

*The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander*, Barbara Coloroso, Harper Collins

### Legislation

*Bill 13, Accepting Schools Act, 2012, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying ...*

[http://ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills\\_detail.do?locale=en&BillID=2549](http://ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&BillID=2549)