

# CWAA ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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## I. CWAA ANTI-BULLYING STATEMENT

*CWAA is committed to providing students and staff with a positive and caring school environment where all students feel safe and respected and learning can take place. Therefore, bullying is unacceptable at any time and in any situation and will not be tolerated at CWAA. Bullying conflicts sharply with the CWAA's Mission and the Student Code of Conduct.*

*Note: This Bullying Policy is made in consultation with the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada Education Code policy, A Brief Guide for Development, Implementation and Evaluation of Effective Anti-Bullying Program in Adventist Schools ([www.catnet.adventist.ca](http://www.catnet.adventist.ca)) and has been adapted from Alberta Education (Character and Citizenship Education in Alberta Schools) and Calgary Board of Education (Let's Talk About Bullying).*

## II. UNDERSTANDING BULLYING

According to Alberta Education, "bullying is a conscious, willful, deliberate, repeated and hostile activity marked by an imbalance of power, intent to harm and/or threat of aggression. It can be verbal (name-calling, put-downs, threats, homophobic bullying, social (exclusion, gossip, ganging up), physical



(hitting, damaging property) or cyber bullying (using the computer to harass or threaten)". It can occur within a peer group or between groups. It can occur at school and in sports.

Bullying is **NOT** a normal part of growing up, and it does not build character. Bullying is a form of abuse. It is a learned behavior that hurts everyone—those who get bullied, those doing the bullying, and the people watching. Bullying damages schools, communities and society at large. Bullying affects children's psychological well-being and academic performance.

Bullying is a relationship problem. It is the assertion of interpersonal power through aggression. Bullying is a series of issues and interactions and communication break downs that lead to hurt and damage.

Bullying involves:

- repeated and consistent negative actions against another.
- an imbalance of power between the bully and the target.
- a contrast of feelings between the bully and the target as a result of the bullying episode (the child who bullies may feel excited, powerful or amused, while the target feels afraid, embarrassed or hurt).

The four most common types of bullying are:

1. **Verbal Bullying**—name calling, sarcasm, teasing, spreading rumors, threatening, making references to one's culture, ethnicity, race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation, unwanted comments.
2. **Social Bullying**—mobbing, scapegoating, excluding others from a group, humiliating others, gestures or graffiti intended to put others down.
3. **Physical Bullying**—hitting, poking, pinching, chasing, shoving, coercing, destroying, unwanted sexual touching.
4. **Cyber Bullying**—using the Internet (Social Networks such as FaceBook) or text messaging to intimidate, put down or spread rumors about someone.

*Parents and teachers are generally unaware of the extent of bullying among children. Many students who have been bullied or been bullied do talk to their teachers or parents about the problem; yet, many students downplay or hide bullying incidents, often, because they fear retaliation, feel pressure to deal with their own problems or feel that adults are unable to protect them from future bullying.*

Bullying behaviors cross all age groups, sometimes beginning as early as two or three years of age and reaching into adulthood. Although the forms of bullying may change as people get older, the issues of power and control remain the same. Similarly, boys and girls are involved in bullying at about the same rate, but how they bully may differ. For boys, bullying is more likely to take direct, often physical forms—kicking, hitting, pushing, shoving and threatening. Among girls, bullying is more likely to be indirect, involving acts of social alienation such as spreading rumors, withdrawing friendship or ignoring.



### III. EFFECTS OF BULLYING

Bullying can have serious consequences for the individual students involved, the school community and society. Students who are bullied may experience physical symptoms such as stomachaches, headaches and nightmares, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. They may also experience social isolation, develop a negative view of themselves and school, and have increasing difficulty with school achievement. Widespread bullying creates a school environment of fear and hostility that negatively impacts the feelings and learning of all students.

Bullying is increasingly understood as a form of trauma that negatively affects individuals' ability to make friends, belong to groups, deal with authority figures and relate to loved ones. Long-term effects for Targets include feeling shame, believing they are unlikable, thoughts of revenge, difficulties with anger, anxiety (especially in social situations) and depression. Bullying can also be a precursor to other aggressive behaviors with serious social effects. Without intervention, bullying behaviors tend to remain constant or escalate rather than improve as the child gets older. Bullying behaviour that is ignored may progress into gang attacks, physical or sexual assault, dating violence, marital violence, workplace harassment, and child or elder abuse.

### IV. OBSERVING BULLYING

Bullying is very much a group phenomenon, with 85 percent of bullying taking place in the presence of others (including social media). When students observe bullying, several things commonly happen:

- Aggressive behaviors are modeled by someone who appears to be more powerful.
- More positive peer attention is paid to the student who bullies than the student who is bullied.
- The presence of others makes it seem that several people are involved.

These factors reduce the feelings of guilt of the student who engages in bullying and lower the inhibitions of the students who are observing. As a result, even though most students report that watching bullying makes them feel uncomfortable, observing these incidents may actually make students more likely to engage in bullying themselves.

On the other hand, *when onlookers do intervene, they are often effective in stopping bullying.* Furthermore, if the school community values and encourages active intervention in bullying situations, students are more likely to challenge bullying behaviors. By providing students with the skills and confidence to intervene in bullying situations, schools can take a significant step towards stopping bullying behaviour.

### V. DEVELOPING A SUPERVISION PLAN

The single most effective deterrent to bullying is adult presence and supervision. Since most bullying behaviors occur during break times, well-planned supervision at these times is critical to reducing bullying incidents. Strategies that may reduce bullying through supervision include:

- Provide close supervision in areas where bullying most frequently occurs (washroom/locker rooms, hallways, playgrounds, parking lots).
- Teach appropriate games and activities that students can participate in at recess or during the



lunch hour.

- Consider scheduling changes that will reduce the number of students in the hallway at any one time. (Crowded hallways are a prime location for bullying.)
- When incorporating cooperative learning into classroom instruction, ensure students have opportunities and the support they need to learn and practice the new skills that will make cooperative learning a good experience for all students.
- Form a leadership club to train volunteer playground leaders to help younger children with group games (e.g., managing equipment and refereeing).

## VI. DEALING WITH BULLYING

### What Targets should do:

- **Realize that they are not alone.**
- **Realize that it not their fault.**
- **Talk about it with a trusted adult.** (Parents, teachers, administrators and other school personal MUST respect the anonymity of the Target and/or reporting student. Until students trust that this will happen, bullying will go unreported, and bullies will continue to thrive. The most effective intervention against bullying is adult involvement.)
- **Be polite, firm and assertive with the bully.**
- **Report the incident to a school official** (either verbally or written to a teacher or the principal).

### What Bystanders should do:

- **Befriend the friendless.** (A casual greeting and an occasional conversation can communicate to the whole school that this person is more than a target for bullies.)
- **Don't gossip.** (Gossip can further relational bullying when gossip is used to keep someone on the 'outside'.)
- **Don't watch and don't react.** (Bullies love an audience and are looking for support.)
- **Offer verbal support in private or in front of the clique leaders.**
- **Tell a parent or teacher.**

### What Students who have Bullied should do:

- Learn how to handle and control their anger and behavior.
- Ask, "Why am I doing this?"
- Get help to feel better about themselves.
- Try to stop picking on someone for just one day.
- Talk to another bully and discuss their behavior.
- Think about how they would feel if they were the Target.
- Try to get attention by doing something good.
- Cut it out, confess their wrongs, and make it right.

### What Parents should do:

- **Wait for their child's timing.** (Use open-ended questions and be patient for them to share their pain.)
- **Listen carefully.** (Don't jump into the problem-solving mode. Ask them questions and try to get



as complete a picture as possible.)

- **Offer advice only when it is requested.** (Don't tell your child what to do and force a solution on them. Ask them how you can help. Empower them to solve the problem on their own so they can gain confidence in their abilities to resolve conflict. You are teaching them life skills, and you don't want to miss the lesson on how to deal with bad things in their lives.)
- **Empathize.** (Put yourself in their shoes and feel their pain.)
- **Validate their experience.** (Take the complaint seriously and let them know you are on their side. You are their 'safety net' in times of trouble. Even if it turns out to be routine peer conflicts, your child needs to know you will protect them.)
- **Help them make friends.**
- **Affirm and admire.** (Tell your child what you like about the way she is handling the bullying situation. Affirmation is the best reinforcement and encouragement tool you have at your disposal.)
- **Empower.** (Start with your child's strategies and build on them. Help your child avoid the situation that expose them to the bullying. Point out places your child can go for help. Develop a list of friendly kids.)
- **Protect and advocate.** (In select situations, it is important to talk to other parents, teachers and school administrators. Do this with your child's input. Review the results together. Keep a written record of what happened.)
- **Be open to seeing the whole story.** (It is natural for parents to jump to their children's defense when they are threatened. Yet, it is possible that their children may not have provided the full story on the first telling.)
- **Don't break confidentiality unless absolute necessary.** (It is vital for you to have an open and trusting relationship with your child. If he or she does not want you to contact others, then respect and follow those wishes if it is at all possible to do so and it is in the child's best interest. Sometimes bullying situations can become dangerous and even life threatening, and you will feel compelled to contact the proper authorities for the sake of your child's safety. Make sure you first explain to your child why it is necessary to break his or her confidentiality.)
- **Don't tell your child to 'hit them back'.** (This may be the worst advice you can give. Physical resistance can breed revenge and more attacks. As a rule, physical coercion is not a good problem-solving technique.)
- **Don't emotionally crowd out your child's feelings with your own anxiety.** (Parents must model the emotional maturity they want their child to emulate. They also must provide a safe, nurturing context for their child to share his or her thoughts and feelings. If children see their parents becoming emotionally charged every time they report a problem they will stop sharing their feelings.)
- **Communicate with the school.** Give the school the benefit of the doubt. Develop a strategy for your call or meeting. Bring a written summary of the incidents. Request that additional supervision and/or monitoring be provided in the target bully areas. Follow up with school personnel about progress and difficulties.
- **Be a positive role model.** Set a good example, reinforce positive behaviour and create constructive leadership situations.



### **What CWAAC should do:**

Since most of the non-electronic bullying is hidden from adults, CWAAC is reliant on the Targets or parents to report the unobserved bullying incidents. When CWAAC is made aware of a bullying incident, the following response will be taken to *help the Target*, to *reduce the chance of further bullying* and to *maintain a safe and caring school culture*:

1. acknowledge the incident and the student's feelings
2. gather information about what happened and who was involved
3. assure the student that there will be consequences for the student(s) who bullied
4. help the student create a plan for preventing future bullying
5. contact the student's parents regarding the incident and the school's plan for responding
6. follow up with the student to determine the success of the plan, the student's feelings and the risk of further bullying
7. track the incident using a form or other method.

### **VII. INTERVENING WITH STUDENTS WHO HAVE BULLIED**

When dealing with a student who has bullied, the first priority will be to maintain the safety and security of the student who has been bullied to prevent further bullying incidents. In dealing with the student who has bullied, the following guidelines will be followed:

- ensure the safety of other students
- help the student who bullied to change his or her behaviours and attitudes
- take immediate action to stop the behaviour (e.g., sending the student to the office or another predetermined location)
- identify and apply the appropriate level of intervention depending on the nature, degree and duration of bullying behaviors, for example:
  - pointing out the impact on the student who was bullied and any observers
  - reminding the student of the school's rules or behavioral expectations
  - imposing a school sanction
  - assigning a social learning intervention
  - reporting or referring to police, counselor or other professionals
  - creating an individual safety and support plan
- contacting the student's parents regarding the incident and the school's response
- tracking the incident using a form or other method.

### **Individual Support Plans**

In cases where bullying behaviour is persistent and serious, an individual safety and support plan may be developed 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 students. An effective plan also supports the student's participation in age-appropriate activities with peers. A safety and support plan is developed collaboratively with community professionals. A team is formed to create, implement and monitor the plan. The plan may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- meeting with the parents
- contact and/or referral to community support services including social worker, psychologists or



behavioral consultants or to Alberta Children's Services or with the school chaplain or other support personnel to help the student deal identify the root causes and develop appropriate strategies to handle his/her anger and inappropriate responses

- contact police to come to the school to meet with students who have been bullying. (The officer could also talk with the students who have been bullied about strategies for dealing with such situations.)
- supervision of the student upon arrival at school, during recess, lunch, after school and any other less structured times
- identification of designated play areas
- specific behaviour-management strategies including a plan for reinforcing appropriate behaviour
- a plan for involving the student in positive activities with peers
- scheduled review and update of the plan.

Note: Section 12 of the School Act says that students must *be diligent in pursuing their studies, attend school regularly and punctually, cooperate fully with everyone authorized to provide educational programs and other services, comply with school rules, account for their conduct and respect the rights of other*. If a student does not comply with these requirements the principal may recommend corrective measures up to and including suspension or expulsion from school in accordance with the School Act.

### **VIII. CWAA BULLYING-PREVENTION INITIATIVES**

CWAA recognizes that there are no simple solutions to bullying issues. Developing successful bullying-prevention initiatives require time and intentional collaboration and focuses on prevention rather than reaction. A successful bullying-prevention program depends largely on creating awareness, encouraging a sense of shared responsibility in school communities, and gaining the support of parents and the “caring majority” of students in responding to the issue.

The following initiatives are intended to engage community support, heighten expectations for a positive and respectful school climate, and act as a springboard for ongoing discussions about the value of bullying-free schools. The following initiatives will be implemented over a period of time in consultation with teachers and according to the needs assessed by the anti-bullying committee:

1. Clearly communicate the CWAA anti-bullying policy and procedures with all staff, students and parents/guardians at the start of the year and again throughout the year (student hand-book, assemblies, classrooms, newsletters, curriculum night, parent orientation, etc).
2. Meet early in the school year with students who have exhibited bullying behavior at the school in the past and offer appropriate channels of preventative support and intervention to them for the upcoming school year.
3. Place anonymous boxes in strategic places where students can report incidents of harassment/bullying that they have experienced/witnessed. Boxes will be monitored daily.
5. Display anti-Bullying posters and signs throughout the school in high profile/traffic areas.
6. Create a community-based anti-bullying committee comprised of teachers, parents, students and interested community members to raise awareness and to find solutions about bullying.
7. Participate in bully Awareness Week, Nov 12-17 ([www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/](http://www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/)) to raise awareness about the serious impact that bullying behaviors have on students.



8. Provide Professional Development to staff on bullying/harassment (special speakers or webinar)
9. Provide presentations for the community in general on the issue of bullying and cyber bullying.
10. Provide educational materials to teacher that address the issue of bullying and incorporate the bullying-prevention plan into classroom-based discussions of expectations for student behaviour.
11. Increase supervision in high risk areas and increase monitoring of students who have reported bullying (ask students privately if anyone is bullying or harassing them).
12. Link the bullying prevention to character and citizenship curriculum education.
13. Add bullying-prevention books, DVD's and other resources to the school library and advertise and encourage parents, students and staff to borrow.
14. Document all efforts that are being made to prevent and curb bullying and track the number of bullying reports received from students and parents. Report this back to staff and parents.
15. Discuss bullying regularly at staff meetings (successes, adaptations required, noticeable differences in student relationships, perception changes, additional training, changes in bullying patterns, learning from/sharing with other schools, etc.)
16. Administer annual, age-specific surveys and parent surveys to assess attitudes and knowledge about the issue of bullying.

## IX. REFERENCES

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