



Halton District School Board

KEEPING OUR KIDS SAFE AT SCHOOL

Dear Parents/Guardians/Employees of the Halton District School Board:

A positive and inclusive school environment is essential for students to succeed. All of us – staff, students, parents, and community partners – have a part to play in making schools safer.

What's Changing? New legislation (Bill 157) and Board Policy in effect as of February 1, 2010 requires that **all board employees** and **transportation providers** **MUST REPORT** behaviours that can lead to suspension or expulsion under the Code of Conduct. Reports will be made using a prescribed form.

Staff who work directly with students (including principals, vice principals, teachers, educational assistants social workers, child and youth workers, speech and language staff and psychology staff) **MUST RESPOND** to incidents that have a negative impact on the school climate, including homophobic, racist, inappropriate sexual behaviour or comments, slurs, jokes, graffiti or vandalism, and any other incidents that can lead to suspension or expulsion. A staff member must respond to all such incidents, unless doing so would cause immediate physical harm to himself or herself, a student or any other person. In these cases staff are expected to report the incident to the principal as soon as it is safe to do so. Responding may include:

- identifying behaviour as inappropriate and unacceptable
- asking the student(s) to stop the inappropriate behaviour
- explaining why it is inappropriate or disrespectful
- asking the student(s) to change their behaviour in future
- reporting the behaviour to the principal
- bringing the behaviour to the attention of parents/guardians

All employees and transportation providers must take into consideration mitigating or other circumstances which may explain behaviour for students with known special needs, or for students requiring alternative education **as per the direction of the Principal**. The response provided for students with special needs should be consistent with the student's strengths, needs, goals and expectations contained in the Individual Education Plan (IEP). The response required for students in alternative education should be **as per the direction of the Principal**.

What happens when an incident is reported to the principal?

The **Principal/Vice Principal** (or designate) determines what disciplinary action, if any, is required. Progressive discipline ranges from verbal reprimand or reminders of the expectations to suspension and/or recommendation for expulsion. These disciplinary actions are confidential. If the incident leads to suspension, the principal will inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student, unless the student is 18 years or older or is a 16- or 17-year-old student who has withdrawn from parental control, unless their consent is provided.

Principals must contact the parents of victims unless doing so would, in the opinion of the principal, put the student/victim at risk of harm, or if the student is 18 years or older or is a 16- or 17-year-old student who has withdrawn from parental control, unless their consent is provided. The principal can tell the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the victim about:

- the nature of the incident;
- the harm their child may have suffered and the steps taken to protect the student's safety, including whether or not police have been contacted.
- The principal cannot name or provide any identifying information about the student being disciplined, or share specific information about consequences, including suspension or expulsion, or actions taken by police.

Supporting Victims

Information regarding **services and supports for victims** must be provided to victims and their parent(s)/guardian(s). School staff who work directly with students are required to support students who are victims of serious student incidents. Staff will provide students wishing to discuss issues such as healthy relationships, gender identity and sexuality with contact information about professional supports available in their community such as public health units, help phone lines – or other community agencies that offer the appropriate type of confidential support. This may include, for example, a sexual assault centre, Kids Help Phone, or the Lesbian Gay Bi Trans Youth Line. (Please see our website for a list of resources available in Halton or contact your local school Principal, Social Worker or Child and Youth Counsellor).

HALTON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD CODE OF CONDUCT

Student behaviours that can lead to suspension as per the Education Act 306(1) include:

1. Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person.
2. Possessing alcohol or illegal drugs.
3. Being under the influence of alcohol.
4. Swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority.
5. Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the student's school or to property located on the premises of the student's school.
6. Bullying.

Halton District School Board Code of Conduct includes the following infractions for which suspension may be considered:

7. Disorderly conduct, persistent opposition to authority, conduct injurious to the moral tone of the school or to the physical or mental well being of others in the school.
8. Possession or use of explosive devices, including fireworks.
9. Fire setting, initiating a false alarm, making a bomb threat, or an act that places individuals, property or community at risk.
10. Extortion – attempting to take money or property under threat of harm or duress.
11. Harassment – repeated comments or conduct that is known or ought to be known as unwelcome; on the basis of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, colour, ethnicity, culture, citizenship, ancestry, origin, religion, creed, family status, socio-economic status, disability and/or any other immutable characteristic or ground protected by the Human Rights Code, as well as inappropriate sexual behaviour.
12. Hate crimes – words or actions considered offensive in reference to a person's gender identity, sexual orientation, race, colour, ethnicity, culture, citizenship, ancestry, origin, religion, creed, family status, socio-economic status, disability and/or any other grounds protected by the Human Rights Code of Ontario.
13. Smoking on school property – violation of the Tobacco Control Act, 1998.
14. Theft – taking, possessing property without the permission of the owner.
15. Vandalism of school or Board property.
16. Reckless or dangerous use of a vehicle (e.g. car, motorcycle, bicycle, etc.) on school property.

Student behaviours that can lead to expulsion as per the Education Act 310(1) include:

1. Possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm or knife.
2. Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person.
3. Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner.
4. Committing sexual assault - touching of a sexual nature that is known or should be known as unwanted.
5. Trafficking in weapons, illegal or restricted drugs.
6. Committing robbery.
7. Giving alcohol to a minor.

Halton District School Board Code of Conduct includes the following infractions for which expulsion may be considered:

8. An act considered by the principal to be significantly injurious to the moral tone of the school and/or the physical or mental well being of others.
9. A pattern of behaviour that is so inappropriate that the student's continued presence is injurious to the effective learning and/or working environment of others;
10. Activities engaged in by the student on or off school property that cause the student's continuing presence in the school to create an unacceptable risk to the physical or mental well-being of other person(s) in the school or Board;
11. Activities engaged in by the student on or off school property that have caused extensive damage to the property of the Board, or to goods that are/were on Board property.

Where a student has no history of discipline or behaviour intervention, or no relevant history, a single act, incident or infraction considered by the principal to be a serious violation of the expectations of student behaviour and/or a serious breach of the School/Board Code of Conduct may result in the principal suspending a student and conducting an investigation to determine whether to recommend to the board that the student be expelled.

For further information please contact your school principal or check our Board's website at www.hdsb.ca or learn more about Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act by visiting www.Ontario.ca/safeschools.

For the online training module, please go to <http://bill157.apandrose.com>