

POLICY NO: 5.3	
Adopted	2019
Projected Review Date	2029
Revisions	2019, 2025

POLICY: CODE OF CONDUCT

PURPOSE:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) recognizes that it is the responsibility of all individuals within the school community to contribute to a positive school climate that upholds human rights, safety and well-being and promotes the prevention of bullying and harassment. Every person must be supported to feel safe and secure in an equitable learning community where they are included, respected, and valued. All students, parents, guardians, caregivers, principals, teachers, all other school staff, and itinerants have the right to be safe, and to feel safe in their school community. The HWDSB Code of Conduct Policy sets out the standards of behaviour of all persons in schools and workplaces and is consistent with the [Provincial Code of Conduct](#).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to:

- Truth and Reconciliation through Indigenous Wellness and Reconciliation.
- Fostering and maintaining a culture of human rights at HWDSB by providing equitable and inclusive services grounded in the principles of equity, inclusive design, anti-racism, anti-colonialism and decolonization, and anti-oppression; and identifying and addressing discriminatory biases and systemic barriers.
- Governance and services that are grounded in a human rights-based approach centered on principles of participation, inclusion, belonging, transparency, and accountability.
- Creating safe, inclusive, and caring school environments through a whole-school approach focused on healthy relationships and the development of positive school climate.
- Promoting responsibility, respect, civility, and academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment.
- Creating student-centered learning environments where identity and lived experience are affirmed and honored as an essential part of learning and reciprocity is demonstrated by listening to and responding to student voice.
- Building trust through humility and transparency in our actions – listening, documenting, responding and being accountable at the school and system level for improvement in student safety and well-being through the monitoring and review of data and communicating outcomes to the community.
- Fostering positive school climates where all members feel safe, included, and accepted, and that actively promote positive behaviours and interactions.

- Applying Standards of Behaviour as defined in the policy for all members of the school community.
- Developing prevention and early intervention strategies to address inappropriate behaviour.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

Positive School Climate:

- Promote responsible citizenship by encouraging appropriate participation in the civic life (physical and digital) of the school community.
- Promote and realize human rights as Duty bearers and Duty holders.
- Prevent bullying in schools.
- Promote the safety of people in schools.
- Discourage the use of alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, electronic cigarettes, and illegal drugs.

Healthy Relationships:

- Nurture respectful and reciprocal relationships with Indigenous students, families, and communities to cultivate healing and wellness.
- Build and foster relationships with Black, racialized and other students and families who have been historically and presently underserved by our school system.
- Collaborate with students, families, and communities to build reciprocal relationships that enhance equitable access and engagement for every student.
- Ensure that all members of the school board community are treated with respect and dignity.
- Maintain an environment where conflict and difference can be addressed in a manner characterized by respect and civility.
- Encourage the use of non-violent means to resolve conflict.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Chief Executive Officer

TERMINOLOGY:

Accessibility: Creating environments, resources, and opportunities that allow everyone, including those with disabilities, to fully participate and thrive without barriers.

Bias: A tendency, belief, or inclination that unfairly favours or disadvantages individuals or groups, often based on stereotypes or incomplete information.

Bias-Free Approach: A way of thinking and acting that avoids stereotypes, assumptions, or unfair judgments, ensuring all decisions and actions are equitable and inclusive.

Bullying: Repeated and intentional behaviour that causes harm, fear, or exclusion, involving a power imbalance between individuals or groups, often targeting vulnerabilities.

Code of Conduct: A set of expectations and guidelines for behaviour that promote respect, responsibility, and inclusivity within the school community, ensuring a positive and safe environment.

Conflict: A disagreement or difference in perspectives or interests between individuals or groups, which may cause tension but does not involve harmful intent or power imbalances.

Discrimination: Treating someone unfairly or denying opportunities based on characteristics like race, gender, religion, disability, or other protected grounds, undermining equity and inclusion.

Duty Bearers: All HWDSB employees, as duty bearers, have a particular obligation to respect, promote and realize human rights. Those with a position of responsibility have enhanced roles and responsibilities.

Duty to Report: A legal obligation for individuals in specific roles to notify authorities about risks or harm to children, ensuring their safety and well-being.

Equity and Inclusion: The active removal of barriers and promotion of practices that ensure fairness, respect, and equal access to opportunities, so all individuals feel valued and supported.

Gender Expression: The external presentation of one's gender through clothing, behaviour, or appearance, which may or may not align with societal expectations.

Gender Identity: A person's deeply held sense of their own gender, which may align with or differ from the sex assigned at birth, reflecting individual diversity and self-awareness.

Harassment: Ongoing and unwelcome behaviour that intimidates, demeans, or offends, creating a hostile or unsafe environment for the targeted individual or group.

Hate Speech: Communication, whether verbal, written, or symbolic, that promotes hatred or violence against individuals or groups based on their identity, causing harm and division.

HWDSB Community: Students, staff, parents, guardians, caregivers, trustees, community advisory, committee members, school council members, permit holders, vendors, service providers, contractors, volunteers, visitors, all other persons who are invited, access, or provide services to, or attend Board and school events and any person or entity who enters into an agreement, or uses school board property.

Indigenous Knowledge and Ways of Knowing: The cultural teachings, practices, and worldviews of Indigenous Peoples, rooted in respect, interconnectedness, and sustainability, offering valuable

perspectives and insights.

Misconduct: Behaviour that violates established rules, disrupts the well-being or safety of others, or undermines the positive culture of a school environment.

Privilege: Unearned advantages or benefits that individuals receive based on their social identity or societal status, often unnoticed by those who benefit from it.

Progressive Discipline: A proactive and supportive approach to addressing inappropriate behaviour, using interventions and consequences to encourage learning and positive change.

Restorative Practices: A method of addressing conflict or harm by focusing on repairing relationships, fostering accountability, and rebuilding trust within a community.

Safe and Caring Schools: Schools that prioritize safety, inclusivity, and well-being, fostering environments where every student feels respected, supported, and empowered to succeed.

School Climate: May be defined as the learning environment and relationships found within a school and school community. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included, and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions. Principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in the learning environment to support a positive school climate and a culture of mutual respect. A positive school climate is a crucial component of the prevention of inappropriate behaviour.

Violence: Physical force, threats, or actions that cause harm, fear, or emotional distress, disrupting the safety and security of individuals or communities.

ACTION REQUIRED:

- Maintain a Code of Conduct procedure that is consistent with the Provincial Code of Conduct and distinguishes between staff, students, and other members of the school community.
- Develop and implement a procedure on how surrendered items, including personal mobile devices, will be handled in compliance with applicable provincial policy and legislation, including the Education Act and the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017.
- Ensure enforcement mechanisms to address the possession, use and provision of tobacco, electronic cigarettes, nicotine products, recreational cannabis, alcohol, and illegal drugs are a part of our procedures.
- Ensure this policy and all corresponding procedures are accessible and communicated in a variety of manners, at minimum, annually to all parents, students, principals, teachers, other school staff, and other members of the school community in order to obtain their commitment and support. The communication will:
 - Include information on how all members of the school community can appropriately report unacceptable behaviour.
 - Consider and include parents, caregivers, and guardians whose first language is a language other than English or French.

- HWDSB follows the direction of the Provincial Model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol regarding mandatory and discretionary notification of incidents to the police.
- Ensure this policy and all corresponding procedures are reviewed every three years, or otherwise as stated by Ministry or Board direction.

PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Intended Outcome	Assessment
Positive School Climate: • Promote responsible citizenship by encouraging appropriate participation in the civic life (physical and digital) of the school community. • Promote and realize human rights as Duty bearers and Duty holders. • Prevent bullying in schools. • Promote the safety of people in schools. • Discourage the use of alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, electronic cigarettes, and illegal drugs.	• Student and Staff Voice Surveys • Suspension and Expulsion data • Ongoing feedback from HWDSB community (e.g., Engage platform)
Healthy Relationships: • Nurture respectful and reciprocal relationships with Indigenous students, families, and communities to cultivate healing and wellness. • Build and foster relationships with Black, racialized and other students and families who have been historically and presently underserved by our school system. • Collaborate with students, families, and communities to build reciprocal relationships that enhance equitable access and engagement for every student. • Ensure that all members of the school board community are treated with respect and dignity. • Maintain an environment where conflict and difference can be addressed in a manner characterized by respect and civility. • Encourage the use of non-violent means to resolve conflict.	• Staff and Student Surveys • Suspension and Expulsion data • Ongoing feedback from HWDSB community

REFERENCES:

Part XIII of the Education Act Accepting Schools Act (Bill 13), 2012
Policy/Program Memorandum 128, (October 17, 2018)
Policy/Program Memorandum 145 Policy/Program Memorandum 120 - An Act to Amend the Education Act (Progressive Discipline and School Safety), 2007 Ont. Reg. 472/07 Safe Schools: Creating a Positive School Climate
Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario: Supporting Students with Special Education Needs Through Progressive Discipline K-12
Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009
Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan, 2017
Ontario First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework, 2007
English Language Learners: ESL and ELD Programs and Services, 2007
Trespass Act
Access to School Premises – Ontario Regulation 474/00 OCT Standards of Teaching
Ontario Human Rights Code
Ontario Criminal Code
Provincial Code of Conduct