

# Safe and Accepting Schools

## Board Policy

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**Policy Adopted:** November 2014  
**Revision Date:** June 2025  
**Responsibility:** Superintendent of Education - Safe Schools

### 1. Objective

The Halton District School Board (HDSB) is committed to a whole-school approach to creating safe, caring, inclusive school environments free of bias, discrimination and harassment for all students, staff and members of the school community. The HDSB supports all students in developing healthy relationships, making good choices, continuing their learning and achieving success.

The HDSB upholds the principles of respect for Indigenous Rights, Human Rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Ontario's Human Rights Code, and is committed to pursuing the elimination of direct and adverse effect discrimination on Code-related grounds from its schools and its education system.

### 2. Policy Statement

Halton District School Board recognizes that open dialogue and a whole-school approach are required, and that everyone has a role to play in creating a positive school climate and in preventing inappropriate behaviour, such as bullying, discrimination, racism, harassment, sexual assault, and violence. The HDSB also believes all students, staff, and members of the school community should feel safe at school and are deserving of a positive school climate that is inclusive, equitable and accepting, regardless of any immutable characteristic, including but not limited to race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, two spirit identity, gender expression, age, marital status, or disability.

The *Education Act*, the Provincial Code of Conduct, Policy Program Memoranda 119, 120, 128, 141, 142, 144, 145, and 166, and Ontario Regulations 472/07 and 474 together create expectations for behaviour which apply to students, whether on school property, on buses, at school-related events or activities, or in other circumstances that could have an impact on school climate. As well, they outline strategies and

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consequences to be used to reduce incidents of inappropriate behaviour. The HDSB embraces a progressive approach to discipline in schools appropriate to meet the developmental, individual and special needs of all students, which includes a continuum of supports, interventions, learning opportunities and consequences. The HDSB requires a response to all inappropriate student behaviour that will support a safe learning and teaching environment for all members of the school community.

### 3. Scope

The Halton District School Board realizes that, in some circumstances, positive practices may not be effective or sufficient to address inappropriate student behaviour. In such cases, the board supports the use of consequences which may include, where necessary, suspension and expulsion in accordance with the terms of the *Education Act*, Regulations, and administrative procedures developed by the Director of Education.

Furthermore, the HDSB recognizes that a whole-school approach is required to identify and address risks and threats to student safety. Through staff training, comprehensive threat assessments and the use of effective planning and response procedures the HDSB is committed to supporting the mental health and well being of all students. This policy applies to all members of the HDSB community.

### 4. Guiding Principles

The *Ontario Human Rights Code* has primacy over provincial legislation and school board policies and procedures, such that the *Education Act*, Ontario Regulations, Ministry of Education Program Policy Memoranda and Halton District School Board Policies and Procedures are subject to and shall be interpreted and applied in accordance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

### **Related Board Policies and Governance Procedures**

Equity and Inclusive Education Policy

Indigenous Education Policy

### **Related Board Administrative Procedures**

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Positive School Climate-Progressive Discipline

Suspension and Expulsions

Violence Threat Risk Assessment

Discrimination & Harassment

Anti-Sex Trafficking

Planned Student Prevention, Management and Support

Exclusion of Students

Halton Region Police/School Board Protocol

### **Related Legislation and Industry Documents**

*Ontario Human Rights Code*

*Safe and Accepting Schools Act*

*Education Act, Part XIII Behaviour, Discipline and Safety*

*PPM 119 (Equity and Inclusive Education)*

*PPM 120 (Reporting Violent Incidents)*

*PPM 128 (Provincial/Board/School Code of Conduct)*

*PPM 141 (Programs for Students on Long-term Suspension)*

*PPM 142 (Expulsion Programs)*

*PPM 144 (Bullying Prevention and Intervention)*

*PPM 145 (Progressive Discipline)*

*PPM 166 (Anti-Sex Trafficking)*

*Ontario Regulation 472/07 (Mitigating Circumstances)*

*Ontario Regulation 474 (Access to School Premises)*

*Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations*

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**Policy Due for Review:      June 2029**

## **Revision History**

- June 2025 (M25-065) - Comprehensive Review
  - Revisions include alignment with the 2024-2028 Multi-Year Strategic Plan
  - (MYSP) and administrative changes.