

BOARD POLICY	
Adopted	November 2014
Revised	February 2013, November 2017, January 2018, September 2020, November 2020, January 2022
Review Date	<i>February 2025</i>

SAFE AND ACCEPTING SCHOOLS

1. OBJECTIVE

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

2. POLICY

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, harassment, sexual assault, and violence. The Board 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, gender expression, age, marital status, or disability.

The *Education Act*, the Provincial Code of Conduct, Policy Program Memoranda 119, 120, 128, 141, 142, 144 and 145, 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 consequences to be used to reduce incidents of inappropriate behaviour. The Board 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. In partnership with parents and the community, the development of good character, cultural proficiency and appropriate social skills that build healthy relationships is the priority. The Board requires a response to all inappropriate student behaviour.

The 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. The consequences 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 Board recognizes that a whole-school approach is required to identify risks and threats to student safety. Through staff training, comprehensive threat assessments and the use of effective planning and response procedures the Board is committed to supporting the mental health and well-being of all students.

3. SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES

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*.

This policy is supported with Administrative Procedures specific to positive school climate, bullying prevention and intervention, suspensions and expulsions, exclusion, anti-sex trafficking and violence threat risk assessment. Additional procedures may be developed in support of this Safe and Accepting Schools Policy, including legislative requirements.

Legal References:

Ontario Human Rights Code
Bill 13: 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

Board References:

HDSB Administrative Procedures:
Bullying Prevention and Intervention
Positive School Climate-Progressive Discipline
Suspension and Expulsions
Violence Threat Risk Assessment
Discrimination & Harassment
Anti-Sex Trafficking
Managing Violent and Aggressive Behaviour of Students with Special Needs
Exclusion of Students
Halton Region Police/School Board Protocol