

**TO: All Principals**  
**CC: Academic Superintendents**  
**FROM: A. Cordeiro, Superintendent of Education, School Services**  
**DATE: November 12, 2020**  
**RE: Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week – November 15 - 21, 2020**

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Administrators are kindly asked to share this information with all staff and students.

Ontario has designated November 15 – 21, 2020 as Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week to help promote safe schools and a positive learning environment.

During Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week Ontario students, school staff and parents are encouraged to learn more about bullying and its effect on student learning and well-being. Bullying awareness and prevention are vital for maintaining a healthy, safe and inclusive learning environment, where all students feel accepted and have a strong sense of belonging.

Bullying is defined as a form of repeated, persistent and aggressive behaviour directed at an individual or individuals that is intended to cause (or should be known to cause) fear and distress and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem or reputation. Bullying occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the pupil and the individual based on factors such as size, strength, peer group power and a number of Ontario Human Rights Code protected grounds such as race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, etc.

Schools are encouraged to use this opportunity to explain the different forms bullying can take. These include:

- **Physical** – hitting, shoving, stealing or damaging property
- **Verbal** – name calling, mocking, or making sexist, racist or homophobic comments
- **Social** – excluding others from a group or spreading gossip or rumours about them
- **Electronic** (commonly known as **cyberbullying**) – spreading rumours and hurtful comments through the use of cellphones, e-mail, text messaging and through social media.

## Safe Schools Teams

Safe schools teams are encouraged to plan activities or launch initiatives that heighten awareness of bullying and its impact on the school community.

Each school in Ontario has a safe schools team working to promote a safer and more welcoming learning environment. Teams include the school principal, a teacher, a student (where appropriate), a parent and a member from the broader community.

By organizing Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week activities, schools will be effecting positive change in student achievement and well-being.

## Resources

- [Bullying Awareness and Prevention Q&As](#)
- [Bullying: We Can All Help to Stop It](#)
- [School Climate Surveys](#)

AC/np