

Understanding Bullying: Breaking the Cycle by Embracing our Virtues

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." Matthew 5:9



Thursday, September-05-13

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Preface

We have heard the words “she is bullying me” or “I am being bullied”. We see the reports in the media, hear stories from our children and read devastating consequences of unchecked bullying in print.

The question remains to be answered – Do we, including our children, truly understand bullying?

The aim of this document is to speak directly to you, as parents on the issue of bullying. It is important that parents understand what is bullying, how the school identifies and manages bullying in our school community, and what you can do at home to support your children.

Moreover, this document provides tips on what to look for if you think your child is being bullied, if you think your child may be the “bullier”, or if you believe that your child may be a bystander.

We can stamp out bullying by arming ourselves with the appropriate facts, clear strategies and the alternatives available to us.

Let us define bullying, break the cycle of bullying in our schools by embracing the virtues that define who we are.

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Peace Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light, and

Where there is sadness, joy.

Oh Divine Master,

Grant that I may not so much seek

To be consoled as to console;

To be understood as to understand;

To be loved as to love;

For it is in giving that we receive;

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and

It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Obtaining a Copy of this Document

A physical copy of this document is:

- 1** Kept in the School Office – in the Parent’s Handbook to Bullying binder as well as on a disc and USB key in the binder;
- 2** Given to Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of students who are involved in a “bullying” incident; and
- 3** Stored in *Health* folder of Teacher’s hard drive;

A PDF copy of this document can also be downloaded from:

- 1** The “Letters and Forms” section of the St Gregory CS Website at www.school.stgregorytoronto.com.
- 2** Emailed to you by request from the St Gregory CS Administration Team. Please call the office for a copy at 416.393.5262.

Our Goal

Our goal is to raise the consciousness of
Everyone in our school community regarding
Bullying and to empower students
To deal with bullying situations appropriately.

What is Bullying?

It is not always clear what actions define bullying however the points below define what bullying encompasses:

- Bullying is a dynamic of unhealthy interaction. It is a form of aggression, often over a period of time that is used from a position of power.
- Bullying is a conscious, willful and deliberate hostile activity intended to harm, and induce fear through the threat of further aggression (*B. Coloroso*).
- Bullying is a learned behaviour that directly or indirectly, can be physical, verbal or social (relational) in nature.
- Unlike aggressive acts, rough and tumble play and conflicts between equals, bullying is a deliberate act to harm, and intimidate, where the victim has difficulty defending him or herself.

What are Different Ways of Bullying?

There are four ways of bullying that have been identified and they can do harm alone but are often done together to create a very powerful impact on the student who is bullied.

PHYSICAL BULLYING

Physical bullying is the most visible and most identifiable, however it accounts for less than 1/3 of the bullying incidents reported by children (*B. Coloroso*). This bullying includes hitting, slapping, kicking, choking, poking, shoving, biting, pinching, scratching, twisting limbs, spitting, stealing or damaging property or clothing of the student being bullied or even being threatened with a weapon.

VERBAL BULLYING

Verbal bullying is the most common form used by boys and girls and accounts for 70% of reported bullying. It is much easier to get away with [this type of bullying] since it can be done without detection (*B. Coloroso*). It is easy to do and can be extremely harmful. Verbal bullying can then lead into the other two types of bullying. This bullying includes name-calling, taunting, teasing, verbal threats, sexual, racial or homophobic comments, intimidating phone calls, extortion, belittling, cruel criticism and personal defamation.

SOCIAL/RELATIONAL BULLYING

Social/Relational bullying is very difficult to detect from the outside. The child being bullied may not even hear the rumor but will suffer from its effects (*B. Coloroso*). This bullying includes

ignoring, isolating, excluding or shunning someone from a group, spreading gossip and rumours. Shunning someone and spreading rumors is a forceful bullying tool (*B. Coloroso*). This type of bullying is most powerful in the older grades – with the onset of adolescence.

CYBER BULLYING

Bullies are now using high tech tools to intimidate, stalk, ridicule, humiliate, taunt and spread rumors about the bullied student. This type of bullying includes the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone, text messaging, instant messaging, defamatory web sites and defamatory online polling websites.

Barbara Coloroso writes that the harm caused by cyber bullying may even be greater than the other types of bullying due to the following reasons:

- Online communications can be extremely vicious;
- There is no escape for those being cyber bullied-it is ongoing 24/7;
- Cyber bullying material can be distributed worldwide and is often irretrievable. Once it is out there, it is there forever; and
- Cyber bullies can be anonymous and can solicit the involvement of unknown “friends” (p. 209, *The Bully, bullied and the bystander*).

Who is Involved in Bullying?

When we think of bullying and the participants, the focus is on the student being bullied. Yet there are two other participants – there is the bullier and the bystander that create the bullying situation. *Barbara Coloroso* identifies three participants as the bullied, the bullier and the bystander.

In order to understand bullying and address bullying in our community, it is important to identify and understand these roles.

The Bully

There are many reasons why a child may become a bully. Some children may turn to bullying as a way of coping with a difficult situation, such as the death of a loved one or their parents' divorce. Some bullies may be victims of abuse and act out their frustrations and anger on others. Some want power, control and prestige and are prepared to use aggression and violence to command compliance and allegiance. Some do it for material benefits. Others copy the behaviours of persons they admire (e.g. a TV character portraying aggression). Many times, children who bully others have a distorted view of the world and overlook how others treat him or her.

Moreover, bullies are often not happy and use bullying as a way of trying to achieve popularity and make friends. The bullies pick on others because they believe it is the only way of making their lives better and/or control their surrounding environment.

COMMON TRAITS OF A BULLY

There are some traits that are common in a bullying child. They are usually found to be:

- Physically stronger, and are effective in play activities, sports and fights (applies particularly to boys);
- Pick on others and have strong needs to dominate and subdue others;
- Brag about their actual or imagined superiority over other students;
- Have temperamental inclinations (e.g. being hot-tempered, easily angered and impulsive);
- Have low frustration, tolerance (e.g. have difficulties conforming to rules, tolerating adversities and delays, and may try to gain advantage by cheating);
- Are generally oppositional, defiant, and aggressive towards adults;
- Are seen as being tough, hardened and show little empathy for other students;

- Engage at a relatively early age (as compared with their peers) in other antisocial behaviour;
- Pick on or attack others, targeting in particular those who are weaker and not able to defend themselves;
- Crave attention;
- Use blame, criticism, and false allegations to place their own shortcomings onto the bullied student;
- Tend to hurt other students when parents and other adults are not around;
- Are only worried about their own wants and pleasures and not the needs, rights and feelings of others; and
- Use people to get what they want.

Adapted from D. Olewus (1993), B. Coloroso 2006

The Bullied

No one deserves to be bullied. Children who are bullied come in all shapes and sizes. Each one of those bullied was singled out to be the receiver of verbal, physical, or social aggression because he or she was different in some way. The bully sees these differences as a reason for attacking these children. The myths about who is the target of bullying are based on what a bullied child looks and acts like after having been bullied repeatedly (*B. Coloroso, 2006*).

COMMON TRAITS OF THE BULLIED CHILD

Out of shame and/or fear, very often children do not tell adults that they are being bullied. Adults working with children and parents should be vigilant about the possible signs that children are being bullied at school.

For parents, there are tell-tale signs that a child may be a victim of bullying. The first step is to educate yourself about how your child may react if they are bullied. Every child is different in the way they will handle the bullying.

Children may:

- Be frightened to walk to or from school or be unwilling to go to school at all;
- Be afraid to take the school bus to or from school;
- Ask adults to drive them to or from school or change their route to school;
- Begin to do poorly in their school work;
- Arrive home regularly with clothes torn and/or books or belongings missing;
- Continually lose pocket money;

- Become withdrawn, start stammering, stop eating;
- Cry themselves to sleep and/or have nightmares and call out, "Leave me alone";
- Have unexplained psychosomatic complaints (e.g. feel ill in the morning, frequent stomach pains, headaches, chronic fatigue);
- Have unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts;
- Refuse to say what is wrong;
- Give improbable excuses to explain all of the above; and
- Not having a single good friend to share free time with, never bring classmates home, and never get invited to parties.

Adapted from Kidscape: Stop Bullying

The Bystander

*The 85% silent majority can have a dramatic impact,
if together they take a common stand on injustice.*

If your child is neither a bully nor a victim, he/she is amongst the 85% of students in the school who make up the silent majority in the bullying act. Most school bullying occurs in full public view. Your child has probably witnessed a bullying act or has heard about one from others.

The bully obtains a large part of his/her reward socially (e.g. prestige or recognition that he/she is "superior") and many times has an audience when the bullying behaviour happens.

Now the bully needs a reaction from the audience which may be in the form of entertainment, alarm or fear. As a result, the audience members become part of the action so that the response of the bystanders (audience) feeds into the social chemistry of the bullying act. The bystanders may or may not be aware that they have taken part of the bullying act. For the most part (consciously or subconsciously), the bystanders keep their knowledge, fears and anxieties to themselves without telling adults.

Bystanders are influenced by the hidden values in the student subculture which regards informing on peers as "snitching," "tattle-telling," or being a "rat,". As a result, the bully has a false sense of invincibility and power.

To help children decide what is important to tell in any situation, the students/children need to understand the difference between tattling and telling. It is important that both the teacher and parent/caregiver educate children about tattling and telling. If ever in doubt regarding a potential bullying situation, please encourage the children to speak to their teacher or parent.

Tattling: If it will only get another child in trouble, don't tell me.

Telling: If it will get you or another child out of trouble, tell me. If it is both, I need to know.

Please remember by not telling about a bullying incident also has a cost to the bystander. The bystanders' self-confidence and self-respect are also worn away as they struggle with their fears of getting involved and doing what is morally right. This could eventually lead to apathy and the bullying cycle will continue. The bystander may become the bully themselves.

Adapted from B. Coloroso, (2002)

REASONS FOR NOT INTERVENING

Why don't children intervene? Why do they subconsciously or consciously decide not to talk to the teachers about the bullying incident? We need to think about how we react in situations where we feel vulnerable and do not act. Listed here are some reasons why students that observe a bullying incident do not intervene.

- 1 The bystander is afraid of getting hurt.
- 2 The bystander is afraid of becoming a new target of the bully.
- 3 The bystander is afraid of doing something that will only make the situation worse.
- 4 The bystander does not know what to do.
- 5 The bystander does not believe that their parents/staff will believe them.
- 6 The bystander thinks that it will not make a difference if they say something about what they observed.

B. Coloroso, 2006.

Be an Upstander...

Bullying creates a fearful, unsafe environment. It is really important that children realize and take ownership to create a safe, caring, respectful environment that is bully free.

This means with every student's involvement, cycle of bullying is interrupted, caring can grow stronger. When a whole community can say no to bullies, the bullying cycle is broken. Be an **upstander**, not a bystander!

This leads us into the action phase of our document: How we, the parents, along with our children and the school community can break the cycle by embracing our virtues.

Creating a Safe School Community

In order to create a safe school community, a climate of respect is demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. The classroom is one key area of the school where fairness, positive reinforcement and appropriate discipline begins. Everyone must feel safe and be treated in a consistent, respectful and Christian manner embracing our catholic virtues of hospitality, gratitude, peacemaking, charity, courage, love, forgiveness, justice, compassion and faithfulness (www.tcdsb.org).

Also a safe school community also extends outside of the school. Learning at school encompasses activities outside in the schoolyard with one's peers. Much teaching is done between students, and by teachers dealing with disputes in the yard.

Furthermore in 2000, 'The Safe Schools Act' expanded the definition of where "school" occurs. Not only is the school and the school yard part of the safe school community, under this Act a student is still considered "at school" when travelling to and from school. This means if a student acts inappropriately off school property, during, before or after school, and there is a "nexus" or connection with the school community, the Principal has the discretion to deal with this behaviour.

As a result, in order to break the cycle of bullying, all these areas of our school community need to be included.

"Are you being Bullied?"

So, to break this cycle of violence, we need the support of parents and children. The following sections provide you with the tools to identify whether your child is being bullied, is the bully or is a bystander while providing you with the steps to get help.

Additionally, the document highlights the school's role in creating a safe environment for your child while providing support to you, your family and the children and staff in our school.

Most often, children who are being bullied are often frightened to tell adults what is happening and may deny at first that there is anything wrong. So, if you suspect that your child is being bullied, ask him/her directly. Assure your child of your support and that it is not his/her fault. Take what your child tells you seriously and find out exactly what has been going on.

If your child is being bullied, it is important that both you and your child understand that the bullying will not go away and that it will not be kept a secret. Explain and reassure your child that you, along with the school's support will help to sort out the problem.

What can I do If I think my child is being Bullied?

Remember you and your child are not alone. Approach the situation as a problem to solve together. Your help should come across as instructive and constructive and include them in the process. Let them know that they can count on you.

DO'S

- If you suspect your child is being bullied at school, encourage him/her to talk to you about it.
- Listen carefully and sympathetically. Try to get the relevant facts without interrogating your child. They need to be told that the situation is not hopeless, that adults will intervene on their behalf, and that they should not feel guilty or shameful.
- Don't take over the situation. Unless your child is in serious physical danger, your taking over the situation will convey to your child that he/she is even more helpless than he/she thought.
- If it is decided that the issue should be raised at school, be prepared to describe as accurately as possible to your teacher what has been happening to your child. Please ensure that a private setting is chosen.
- Remember that the school needs to know what has been happening to your child for the good of all the school. Know that the matter will be dealt with immediately, in a way that your child will receive full protection from retaliation by the bully.
- Also remember to practice discretion. When meeting with the teacher, no students should be around, and ideally no students except for your child should know that you are meeting with the teacher. Stay calm and be respectful; your child's teacher wants to help.
- You should be assured that the school's anti-bullying policy and protocol will be put into action.

DON'T

- Blame your child. Bullying is never the victim's fault.
- Promise to keep the bullying secret.
- Confront the bully or the bully's parents.
- Rush into the school yard to intervene.
- Tell your child to "Get in there and fight!"

PLEASE KEEP IN MIND...

Each situation is unique and the school may choose some proven, pragmatic methods to deal with the bully which might not initially appear to you as deserving punishment for the bully. However, if these methods result in a favourable outcome for your child and improve the situation, support the school's methods. Also, keep the school informed about the situation as to whether the intervention is helpful or not by documenting incidents, feelings your child may be experiencing as well as any successes.

Furthermore, each school has an interdisciplinary support team made up of a psychologist, social worker and other professional staff. If these services are required, they are available to you and your child and are accessed through the school principal.

Also, being bullied is a serious matter. Many forms of bullying are criminal in nature (e.g., physical assault, stealing or destruction of personal properties, extortion). As a parent, you may want to report the incidents to the police even if the bully is under age. Ask the police to document the incident. If you are unsure, talk to the principal and teacher and ask for their help.

Suggested Strategies to Deal with Bullying

The following are some strategies that parents may discuss with their children to help them deal with a bully and help older students take control of the situation if they feel comfortable using these strategies. Remember if your child comes to you to talk about bullying, please report it to your teacher. Along with your teacher, discuss the appropriate plan to deal with the situation.

DO'S

- Tell an adult (parent, teacher, social worker, any adults you trust). Keep telling until someone helps;
- Ignore the bully;
- Walk away (don't run unless it is really unsafe);
- Make a joke or laugh it off;
- Stand up to the bully and confront him/her (not in front of the group!) Tell him/her how you feel and that you don't like the bullying;
- Stay close to other friends and classmates. Ask your friends to support you and talk to them about your feelings;
- Stop hanging around friends who are bullying;
- Try to make new friends;
- Join new clubs in the community that make you feel good (sports teams, teen groups, basketball, volunteer with kids programs, church group);

- Get support for yourself, e.g. call a local support line with a TTY number or chat with friends or family (the Kids' Help Phone has a teen website for teens to chat); and
- Let your feelings out. Write in a diary, paint, dance, run, punch a bag. Don't keep it in or take out your anger on someone else.

DON'T

- Disrespect a bully, fight or become a bully yourself; and
- Suffer in silence... Get help.

“And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice,
and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Micah 6:8

Do I have a “Bullying” Child?

Many times, not only are parents of students who are bullied not aware of the situation, parents of a bullying child are unaware and, are often shocked to learn from the school that their child is bullying others.

Most often, the initial reactions are typically disbelief, denial and defensiveness. The bullying student will try to lay the blame on the victim. It is really important under these circumstances as a parent to maintain objectivity, to examine the evidence carefully and to assist the school in its effort to put an end to this negative behaviour.

The focus of a safe school environment is to help both the bullied and the bully. Bullies will learn that bullying is unacceptable and that if they continue to behave unacceptably, there are consequences. Bullies are not allowed to torment others. At the same time, the students that are participating in bullying actions will be provided the appropriate tools from the school community to engage in behaviours that will end the cycle of violence. Not only are they hurting others, they are hurting themselves. Let's end this negative cycle of behaviour.

As a Parent, What Can I Do?

Approach the situation as a problem to solve together. As a parent, your help should come across as instructive and constructive, and include your child in the process. Let them know that they can count on you and the school to help them.

- Ask your child what happened.
- Strive to be non-defensive.
- You want to hear the school's concerns.
- Find out from the school exactly what happened.
- Try not to react emotionally.
- Ask what the school has done to remedy the problem.
- If a meeting is scheduled to deal with the problem, make sure you understand the agenda. Write down any concerns you have about how the school is dealing with your child.
- If your child acts differently at home, or if there are discipline strategies that have worked for you, tell the school.
- Work with the school to solve the problem. Make clear that you are an ally and that you trust that the school will act as an ally.

Adapted from D. Olweus (1993)

Consider the Following Tips At Home

- Try to stay calm and not be defensive: Find out what has been going on, why your child has been bullying and what can be done about it.
- Talk to your child: Give assurances that you still love him/her. Do not accept excuses, but make it clear that the bullying behaviour is not acceptable. Find out from your child if there is anything in particular that is troubling him/her. See if he/she has any ideas about why he/she bullies and how it could be stopped.
- Talk to the school staff: It might be helpful for you and your child to talk to the school psychologist or social worker. Ask the school to arrange this. In some serious cases, both the bully and the family might benefit from psychotherapeutic support. These resources are available to help you and your child. School staff aspires to provide students with a safe environment for all students to learn and adopt positive behaviours that reflect the school virtues.
- Encourage your child to take ownership of the problem and change his/her old ways. Work out with your child ways of making amends for the bullying.
- Always intervene when your child is aggressive. Any time adults do not intervene they are reinforcing problem-solving through aggression. Research has shown that non-contingent parenting methods foster non-compliance, and the inconsistent use of ineffective punishment has the effects of intermittently rewarding defiance.
- Set limits: Help your child work out and practice alternative ways of behaving.
- Model good relationships at home. Help siblings get along. Teach what is unjust, e.g., being older, bigger does not necessarily confer unfair advantages.
- Train children to empathize with the distress and suffering of others.

- Create opportunities for your child to develop his/her talents. Praise him/her when they do things well. Set up a system of reward for good behaviour.
- Help your child design a balanced time-table of educational and recreational activities after school. Make sure that children in groups have something worthwhile to do. Bullying sometimes flourishes in boredom, and when children are together and have nothing to do.
- Be highly selective about which programmes your children watch: TV programmes, videos and video games which have a high violence content subvert your child's values, dulls his/her sensitivity to victim suffering, wears down his/her resistance to violence and legitimizes violence as the accepted means of solving conflicts and frustration.

The Bystander – Be an “Upstander”

YOU HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY

Bystanders play a very important role to stop the cycle of bullying. By choosing not to acknowledge bullying for what it is or to simply dismiss it, is to still be an active participant to the bullying. As parents, it is important to explain how the excuses below will increase the chances of the bystanders becoming the bully. We need to encourage children to do the right thing.

The bystanders might be thinking:

- The bully is my friend
- It's not my problem! This is not my fight!
- She or he is not my friend.
- He's or she's a loser
- He deserved to be bullied, asked for it, had it coming, so why stop it? He didn't even stand up for himself, so why should anyone else stand up for him?
- Bullying will toughen him up.
- Who wants to be called a snitch or a rat, blamed for getting someone else in trouble?
- It's better to be in the in-group than to defend the outcasts.
- It's too big a pain in the brain.

Excerpt taken from B. Coloroso, 2006.

In combating bullying and victimization, as parents, we need to discuss the actions that involve the least amount of risk to the actions that take the most risk. This is the biggest impact on stopping bullying in its tracks.

- Express disapproval of the bullying act, and not be part of the crowd cheering on.

- Come to the aid of the victim. Within safety considerations intervene and take concrete actions to stop the bullying (e.g. shouting out that a teacher is coming, running to the office to get adult help).
- Make extra efforts to include everyone in activities, especially those who are in need of a friend. Befriend those who are socially isolated, particularly in the playground.
- Be a Good Samaritan: safety in numbers and being your brother/sister's keeper makes good survival sense.
- Distinguish between tattle-telling and standing up for what is just; that the myth of tattle-telling is invented by bullies to save their own skin. **Spread the word that bullying is bad for the bullies.**
- Speak out and inform teachers of bullying incidents even if the victim is too scared to tell. This will diffuse the power base of the bully which thrives on intimidating others into silence.

As parents/caregivers, we play an important role of being **UPSTANDERS**. We show by our involvement and by explaining to our children the importance of saying and doing something to stop a bullying act.

This also means that schools are **UPSTANDERS** to break the cycle. The following section provides you and your child St. Gregory's protocol to manage the bullying incident and keep our children feeling safe.



The St. Gregory Catholic School Safe School Protocol

Our goal at St. Gregory is to empower children and the school community to stand up to the bully. All children need to know that they are safe at school. In order to stop the bullying behaviour, it is important to understand what *St. Gregory* will do to support the children in a bullying situation. Also, it is important to understand what the school is doing proactively to keep our schools safe from bullying.

If your child is being bullied:

- 1 He/she should go to the teacher on duty and report the incident (or to the classroom teacher if the incident occurred in the classroom).

The teacher will calmly intervene and diffuse the situation.

- 2 If the classroom teacher feels that it is indeed a case of bullying (see definition) or an on-going situation, the teacher will: gather information; talk to the victim; talk to the suspect bully; talk to the others involved and talk to the bystanders.
- 3 The teacher will then decide upon the appropriate intervention (e.g. reporting to the Vice Principal or Principal, calling parents, discipline report, etc.).

If parents feel that the situation has not been resolved they may:

- 4 Call to meet privately with the classroom teacher to discuss their concerns and possible solutions. Perhaps another intervention will be decided upon (e.g. the teacher, victim and bully get together for a discussion to try to stop the bullying).
- 5 If the bullying continues, you and the teacher may decide to contact the Vice Principal or Principal to establish the next step (see Behaviour Code found in this booklet and in each child's agenda). Possible consequences are also found in these documents – see Appendices.

Your Participation

Thank you for taking the time to review this document and we hope that you share it with your children. Take the pledge and let's end the bullying cycle at St. Gregory!!

Your Feedback

We, at *St. Gregory*, welcome your feedback and comments regarding the information found in this document. Please feel free to discuss this document with the vice principal and/or principal at *St. Gregory*.

Resources

BOOKS

Author	Title
Beane, Allan L.	The Bully Free Classroom - Over 100 tips and Strategies for Teachers – K to 8
Coloroso, Barbara	The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander, 2006
McMullen, Carol	The Bully Solution: A Parent Guide (Effective & Practical Ways to Empower your Child & Stop Bullying in Its Tracks”
Nelson, Jane ED. D, Foster, Steven LCSW, Raphael, Arlene, MS	Positive Discipline For Children with Special Needs: Raising and Teaching All Children to Become Resilient, Responsible, and Respectful
Oleweus, D.	Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do, 1993

Internet Resources	Website
Kids' Help Line 1-800-668-6868	www.kidshelp.sympatico.ca Kids Help Phone is Canada's only free national, bilingual, confidential and anonymous 24 hour telephone and online counselling service. Professional counsellors are available day or night.
Toronto Catholic District School Board	www.tcdsb.org/bullyproofing
Kid Power	www.kidpower.org
TVO Parents	www.tvoparents.tv.org/Bullying Help Kids Succeed in School and Life
Bullying.org	www.bullying.org purpose is to prevent bullying in our society through education and awareness
Stand Up 2 Bullying	www.standup2bullying.com If you can see it, you can stop it: tips for parents, resources, real life stories.
Barbara Coloroso	www.kidsareworthit.com - is an internationally recognized speaker and author in the areas of parenting, teaching, school discipline, non-violent conflict resolution and reconciliatory justice

Appendix A: Keeping Our School Bully-Free

Vision of Our Students

We envision students who are formed in Catholic Faith

Apply Christian values to life's opportunities, challenges and choices

Display self-esteem and self-respect

Strive to be the best they can be

Demonstrate skills for nurturing a healthy family life

Demonstrate global perspectives and community responsibility

Demonstrate relevant knowledge and ability

The staff at St. Gregory School is committed to making St. Gregory a **bully-free zone**. A number of positive measures have been initiated at the school level and involve all the students. They include:

- Virtue Assemblies
- Drama presentations
- Guest Speakers (Community Liaison Officer, Crime Stoppers)
- Cyber bullying Presentation
- Classroom discussions
- Books, Videos
- Reading Buddies
- Intramurals
- Sports Teams
- Anti-bullying posters

- Acts of Kindness Boomerang Initiative

Appendix B: TCDSB Anti-Bullying Campaign

February 23, 2012

The Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) does not tolerate any anti-social or violent behaviour that impacts learning environments. Standards of behaviour must promote respect, civility, responsible citizenship and Catholic values.

The effects of bullying behaviour on students' learning, and on their emotional, physical and psychological health are well recognized. Bullying also runs counter to the Catholic values of respect, inclusion and social responsibility. The TCDSB believes that schools and families working together can make a difference. By encouraging collective responsibility, TCDSB schools can become safe, welcoming communities where students feel secure, valued and free to develop to their full potential.

Therefore, all members of the school community must:

- respect and treat others fairly, regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability;
- respect differences in people, their ideas and opinions;
- treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, and especially when there is a disagreement;
- take appropriate measures to help others in need;
- respect all members of the school community, especially persons who are in a position of authority;
- respect the need of others to work in an environment of learning and teaching;
- seek assistance from a member of the school staff, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully; and
- demonstrate honesty and integrity.

Appendix C: TCDSB Safe Schools Policies

Psychological research on this topic has clearly shown that a whole-school anti-bullying approach is the most effective way of dealing with the problem.

This is most succinctly encapsulated in the statement the British Governments made in its first Action Against Bullying Pack, which was sent to every school in the U.K.

"The single most important thing a school can do to prevent bullying is to have a clear policy to which staff, pupils, and parents are committed."

The TCDSB Policy Register on Violence Prevention sent out to all schools in March, 2005 included these clearly stated principles:

"TCDSB is committed to a safe and welcoming learning environment for our students and staff."

"Students must receive a strong violence prevention message. Those who would use violence to resolve their differences, to harm, to intimidate or to harass others must be certain that they will be dealt with firmly and with demonstrated consequences."

Under the Policy, every TCDSB School is required to establish a Code of Behaviour, which amongst other things will:

"...state unequivocally that intimidation, physical, verbal or written, sexual or psychological abuse, or BULLYING shall not be tolerated."

The policy itself is a statement intended to guide action and organization within TCDSB schools. It assists them in establishing a clear set of agreed aims which provide pupils, staff and parents with a sense of direction and an understanding to do something about bullying behaviour. Individual schools will then define strategies, procedures and systems for preventing and responding to bullying. These will be implemented at a system-wide level, e.g. all parts of the school system have to be addressed in a concerted effort to change attitude and behaviour.

Appendix D: Rights & Responsibilities of a Student

I have the right and responsibility to learn in a Catholic atmosphere:

- I am responsible for my own learning and I allow others to learn.
- I do my best at all times.
- I am honest.
- I come to class with the necessary books and materials.
- I do my homework.
- I arrive at school on time.
- I am respectful during prayer celebrations and religious activities.
- I bring home all school information for my parents.

I have the right to be safe and the responsibility to permit others to feel safe:

- I obey all school rules.
- I avoid games that promote violence or that could hurt others.
- I do not bully others.
- I keep my hands and feet to myself.
- I tell an adult if someone is hurt or doing something dangerous.
- I listen to teachers and supervisors.
- I use school equipment in a safe and respectful manner.
- I play safely on the playground.

I have the right to be respected and to be treated with dignity and the responsibility to treat others in a similar manner:

- I will demonstrate respect for others without discrimination against race, culture or ability.
- I treat everyone kindly and with respect.
- I speak to others in an appropriate and polite manner.
- I listen to others when they speak.
- I respect the space and belongings of others.
- I work quietly so other students can work.

I have the right to learn in a clean environment and the responsibility to do my part in helping to keep our environment clean:

- I keep my desk and classroom neat and tidy.
- I clean up after myself at lunchtime.
- I keep the washrooms clean.
- I throw litter in the garbage.
- I cooperate in keeping the schoolyard clean.

Appendix E: School Conduct

The St. Gregory Catholic School Committee has developed a progressive discipline continuum, which outlines the steps/interventions that will be followed when a student exhibits an “inappropriate behaviour.” Additional information can be found at the TCDSB website at www.tcdsb.org under **Safe Schools Policy S.S.09**.

Minor and Major Incidents, and Incidents requiring Suspension

The St. Gregory Catholic Safe School Committee has classified “inappropriate behaviours” in the following three categories: minor, major incidents and incidents that require suspension. Although the following lists are not exhaustive, they provide a sampling of inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours that are sometimes exhibited by students.

MINOR INCIDENTS

- Hands on (e.g. pushing)
- Spreading rumours
- Teasing
- Being disruptive in class
- Not completing homework
- Rough play
- Any other inappropriate incident (s) other than the ones deemed to be “Major or Suspendable” by school administration, the TCDSB and the Ministry of Education.

MAJOR INCIDENTS

- Malicious/intentional hands on (e.g. fighting)
- Swearing/Inappropriate language (verbal, gestures)
- Habitual defiance or non-compliance
- Bullying (including cyber/internet)
- Weapons
- Vandalism
- Any other inappropriate incident (s) other than the ones deemed to be “Minor or Suspendable” by school administration, the TCDSB and the Ministry of Education.

INCIDENTS REQUIRING SUSPENSION

- All behaviours that are classified as being “Major”
- Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person
- Swearing at a teacher or another person in authority
- Bullying (including cyber/internet)
- Committing an act of vandalism that causes damage to school property
- Possessing a weapon or a firearm
- Using a weapon to threaten bodily harm
- Committing a physical assault on another person requiring medical attention
- Trafficking illegal drugs or weapons
- Any other incident deemed to be “suspendable” by the school administration, the TCDSB and the Ministry of Education.

MITIGATING FACTORS

- Mitigating factors shall be considered with every incident. For a complete list of factors consult the **TCDSB’s Safe School Policy S.S. 09**.