



Evaluation of the "Imagine...A School Without Bullying" Tool in the Region of

Waterloo: Parent Survey

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Abstract

Bullying behaviour and its adverse health consequences are a major problem in elementary schools in the Region of Waterloo. The purpose of this project was to gather baseline information on the frequency and context of bullying behaviour as one way to evaluate a new framework tool, "Imagine...A School Without Bullying," as a bullying prevention strategy. The researcher analyzed baseline data from a parent survey at five schools in the Region of Waterloo to determine the frequency and context of bullying behaviour; identify the characteristics of perpetrators and victims (i.e., age, gender, race, and recent enrollment at the school); synthesize recommendations for improvement of the program by parents (i.e., qualitative analysis); and offer recommendations to the Youth Health Team of the Region of Waterloo Public Health Department (ROWPHD) to improve the program. Analysis of the data found that boys are five times more likely than girls to physically bully at least once a month and more than twice as likely to perpetuate verbal bullying at the same rate. At a rate of once or twice a month, boys are far more likely to be bullied physically. Girls are bullied electronically three times more than boys. Grade 6 students, in comparison to students in Grades 4, 5, and 7, experience a greater incidence of name-calling. The researcher found a statistically significant difference between boys and girls with respect to sexual harassment in the form of name-calling. Parents offered constructive criticism, with the most reported themes being more supervision, more education, and harsher punishment. Bullying prevention is best accomplished through a whole community perspective (i.e., students, teachers, school staff, parents, community members). Education, awareness, assessment, intervention, and policy changes are recommended to reduce bullying behaviour.

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Introduction

Bullying is a repeated form of aggressive behaviour and negative action that is widespread in elementary schools. Bullying can be physical (i.e., hitting, pushing, kicking, punching); verbal (i.e., name-calling, making threats); or social (i.e., excluding others, starting rumours). Bullying is characterized by a power imbalance: the bully's intent to harm, the distress of the victim, and the repetitive nature of the behaviour. Children who perpetrate or who are victimized by bullying behaviour are at high risk of severe and persistent physical, mental, and social health problems. Because these consequences represent an obvious public health concern, the need to implement effective prevention strategies is paramount.

The development of bullying prevention strategies is best accomplished by a systemic "whole-school" approach. It is imperative that bullying prevention strategies be a priority for health professionals, school boards, school administrators and teachers, parents, and students. Parents in particular have a unique role in recognizing bullying behaviour or victimization in their child, as well as the incidence and prevention of bullying, because this behaviour is often the result of factors within the home (e.g., parenting style, family stressors, use of aggression and power).

This project was based on an analysis of responses to a parent survey in the Region of Waterloo Catholic elementary schools using the "Imagine...A School Without Bullying" program. The purpose of this project was to identify parents' perceptions of the frequency and context of bullying and victimization in five schools (Sir Edgar Bauer, St. Nicholas, St. Margaret, St. Brigid, and St. Paul). In addition, satisfaction with the

evaluation tool and parents' recommendations to improve preventative and intervention measures were assessed.

Statement of the Problem

Bullying behaviour and its adverse health consequences are a major problem in elementary schools in the Region of Waterloo. The purpose of this project was to gather baseline information on the frequency and context of bullying behaviour as one way to evaluate a new framework tool to develop and implement a bullying prevention strategy.

Objectives of the Study

1. Analyze baseline data from a parent survey conducted at five schools to identify the frequency and context of bullying behaviour.
2. Identify the characteristics of the perpetrators and the victims (i.e., age, gender, race, and recent enrollment status).
3. Synthesize parents' recommendations to improve the program.
4. Offer recommendations to the Youth Health Team of the Region of Waterloo Public Health Department (ROWPHD).

Conceptual Framework

In a discussion paper about bullying, school exclusion, and literacy, Totten and Quigley (2003) suggested that the development of youth problem behaviour, such as bullying, is best understood using the social ecological model. Bullying is a multidimensional construct, and the many mediating risk factors and protective variables interact reciprocally. Parents, other family members, peers, school climate, and individual factors are key players in the social ecology of students. Each student is exposed to diverse combinations of risks and supports, resulting in different behavioural outcomes

(i.e., will the child be a bully, a victim, or a healthy conflict mediator?). Behavioural outcomes are the result of different social environments and interactions. Thus, the most effective intervention strategies focus not only on the contributing factors of the individual but also on the social contextual factors (e.g., family life, healthy school climate, community resources, etc.). Figure 1 is a schematic representation of the social ecological model as it pertains to bullying.

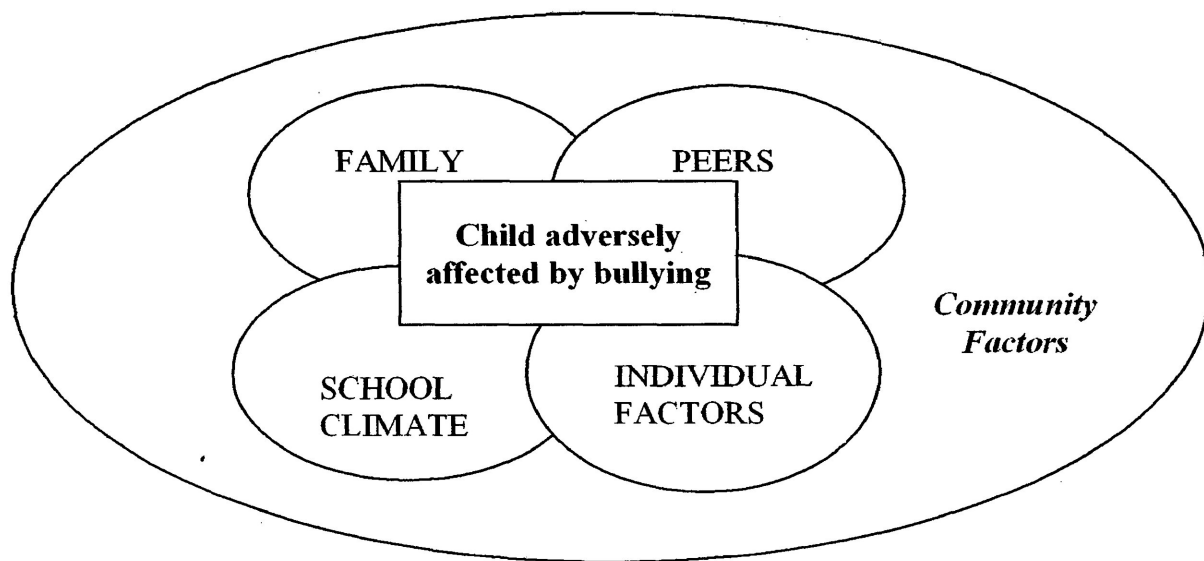


Figure 1. Social ecological model: A conceptual framework for bullying. Adapted from Totten and Quigley (2003).

Mishna (2004) agreed that the social ecological model (Totten & Quigley, 2003) is the best way to interpret bullying behaviour. That is, the dynamics of bullying behaviour extend beyond the students to include social interactions (with peers, teachers, parents, and community members) as well as ecological and cultural conditions as contributors to bullying behaviour. Parents are integral to the social ecological model of bullying because they play a key role in the early socialization of children. The social

ecological model is referenced throughout this project. Though parents were the primary focus of the research (i.e., as the primary source of data on the frequency and context of bullying behaviour), recommendations for change will extend beyond the parents to encompass the entire community, recognizing that each participant (i.e., teacher, student, parent, community member) is an equal contributor and remedy to the problem of bullying in schools in the Region of Waterloo.

Literature Review

What Is Bullying?

A prevailing belief exists that bullying is difficult to define (Mishna, 2004). However, Mishna suggested that a clear definition will assist in classifying the incidence and will strengthen intervention strategies through more consistent actions. Because discrepancies exist in identifying what constitutes bullying, it is important to educate society on what bullying can encompass.

In an analysis of how teachers, students, schools, and parents may collaborate to reduce bullying, Pepler and Craig (2000) defined bullying as “a form of aggression in which there is an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim. The bully is always more powerful than the victim” (p. 1). A common misconception is that nonphysical incidences are not examples of bullying. Although bullying is most often viewed as physical (i.e., hitting, pushing, kicking, punching, theft), it is also verbal (e.g., name-calling, making threats); social (e.g., excluding others, starting rumours); and electronic (i.e., e-mail, text and instant messaging).

The focus of bullying is variable, but it can include sexual harassment and racial discrimination. Sexual harassment is unwarranted and unwelcome behaviour about sex or

gender that interferes with a person's life and makes the individual feel uncomfortable; racial discrimination refers to situations in which people are viewed as different and/or are treated differently because of their racial or ethnic background (Totten, Quigley, & Morgan, 2004a). Bullying is not exclusive to these foci: It can be direct (i.e., face-to-face) or indirect (i.e., behind someone's back). Pepler and Craig (2000) asserted that bullying has four key elements:

- Power imbalance.
- Child who bullies with the intent to harm.
- Distress of the child who is victimized.
- Repeated behaviour over time (reputations and power differential are consolidated).

Pepler, Craig, Hymel, and Boiven (2005), researchers at the Canadian Institute for the Prevention of Bullying (CIPB), established eight guiding principles in reference to bullying. These principles arose from extensive critical and empirically based research and greatly influenced the work on bullying by the ROWPHD.

1. Avoid the stigmatizing labels of bully, victim, and bully/victim. In the materials of the CIPB, as well as the ROWPHD, stigmatizing labels are avoided because bullying arises not only from individual characteristics but also from group dynamics. Labelling a child creates a static focus and discourages change through intervention.

2. Bullying is a community problem, not a school problem. Although the majority of bullying behaviour occurs in and around the school setting, it is not a school problem. Bullying is a community problem, and it involves every person in the child's life (parents, family, school administration and teachers, and community members).

3. Bullying is a relationship problem that requires relationship solutions.

Bullying is a problem in a relationship involving two parties. As such, bullying intervention strategies must address the needs of both parties; if they do not, only half the problem is solved.

4. Bullying requires a developmental/systemic approach. Interventions must be systemic and target attitude and behaviour changes at all levels of the school and the community. They must also be adapted because children at different stages of growth (i.e., age, gender, grade level, skills, background, etc.) have much different needs.

5. Encourage formative, not punitive, consequences for children who bully. Formative consequences not only provide the message that bullying behaviour is unacceptable but also build awareness, skills, empathy, and insight for children who bully. Punitive consequences may act as a temporary deterrent of bullying behaviour, but they do not provide skills for change in the child who engages in bullying behaviour.

6. Knowledge transfer of what works. Share knowledge of effective, evidence-based interventions and evaluation tools. Bullying prevention is a shared goal in Canada.

7. Adults are facilitators of children's healthy development. Adults play a crucial role in managing children's relationships. They can set a positive example in social dynamics and facilitate positive relationships among children through protection; support; and identification of the needs (i.e., empathy, protection) of each child.

8. Reciprocal connections are among the four pillars of their program:

- i. Education/Awareness
- ii. Assessment
- iii. Intervention

iv. Policy

Pepler and Craig (2000) suggested that the frequency and context of bullying and victimization change with age and differ by gender. In a review of the prevalence of school bullying behaviour in various countries, Dake, Price, and Telljohann (2003) found that the highest bullying and victimization rates typically occur at the elementary school level and steadily decline into middle and secondary school. This finding was supported by the (2001) Ontario Student Drug Use Survey (OSDUS), in which 35% of seventh-graders reported victimization, as compared to only 11% of twelfth-graders (Totten & Quigley, 2003).

Incidence of Bullying in Canada

Due et al. (2005) conducted an international, comparative cross-sectional study in 28 countries, and used data from the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children Study to report the average frequency of bullying in Canada from 1997 to 1998 as 12.3% to 17.0%. The 95% confidence interval for frequency of bullying in the study ranged from 11.1% to 18.3% for both boys and girls. Due et al. found that significantly more boys than girls are bullied.

Newman, Holden, and Deville (2005) compiled data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Child and Youth (2003) to support this notion, with a significantly higher proportion of boys manifesting bullying behaviour. They also reported on the combined prevalence of five or more weekly health symptoms (e.g., headache, stomachache, anxiety, etc.) for boys and girls as 24.5% and 35.2%, respectively. The symptoms were not correlated to the prevalence of bullying. When graded associations were made between the experience of bullying and each symptom,

the gradient was notably steeper for psychological symptoms such as “feeling left out” and “feeling helpless,” as compared to physical symptoms. Totten and Quigley (2003) estimated that globally, approximately 15% of students admit to some involvement in bullying behaviour either as the child who bullies or the child who is victimized.

Because of variations in bullying measures in research (e.g. time frames, ages investigated, persons interviewed), it was difficult to draw meaningful standardized data for Canada. However, the OSDUS (2001) concluded that approximately 25% of children are victimized by children who bully. Newman et al. (2005) reported that approximately 30% of children report being victimized at some point in their school lives and that 5% to 10% of them are victimized on a regular basis.

Risk Factors: Children Who Bully

Certain characteristics make some children more likely to be involved in bullying behaviour (i.e., age, gender of the child, level of physical and intellectual ability, ethnicity, and sexual orientation). Bullies perceive that they possess more power with respect to these characteristics, so they use social situations as an arena to exert this perceived power through bullying (Totten & Quigley, 2003). This researcher found that bullies are mostly likely in Grades 6 and 7 and that the youngest students in the school are the most likely victims. Totten and Quigley found that more boys than girls are bullies; however, when they took direct and indirect bullying into account, girls are not as underrepresented in resorting to bullying behaviour.

In regard to the socialization of children, boys and girls come to school with different levels of social preparedness: Masculinity is generally associated with power and aggression, and femininity is generally associated with passivity, nurturance, and

maintenance of social relationships. Females are more likely to develop nonphysical forms of aggression for reasons relating to social acceptance by their peers. Research has suggested that social ostracism, which is rarely recognized as bullying, seems to be the preference of girls (direct bullying is the form of choice for boys). Newman et al. (2005) found that “girls’ experiences with bullying included name-calling, rumours, rejection and teasing, whereas boys experiences included more physical harm, threats and rejection” (p. 344). Thus, boys are likely overrepresented as bullies.

Bullies typically have a history of conduct problems early in life (e.g., hyperactivity, aggression, and defiant behaviour); deficits in social and coping skills; and a low tolerance for frustration (Pepler & Craig, 2000). Children who bully typically come from families that are violent; have ineffective parenting styles (i.e., a power imbalance in the home); experience family stress (e.g., low socioeconomic status, unemployment, poverty, broken family, young parents); and have interparental, parent-child, and sibling conflicts. Another major contributor to bullying is inadequate reinforcement of prosocial behaviour (Totten, & Quigley, 2003). In addition, the school climate, that is, the tangible environmental characteristics of a school (e.g., organizational structure, class sizes, available resources, demographics of staff and teachers, etc.) is inextricably linked to bullying. Students who do not feel a strong sense of membership to the school community, are not immersed or actively involved in school activities, and do not feel the presence of trusting and supportive relationships within the school are the most likely to become bullies (Smith, Ananiadou, & Cowie, 2003).

Risk Factors: Children Who Are Victimized

Children who are the victims of bullies are usually physically weaker, less assertive, more anxious, more insecure, and more isolated. Other factors that affect victimization include gender, race, and exceptionalities affecting appearance and mobility. In family life, children who are victimized typically have overprotective parents and are more likely than bullies to be from homes where parental emotional, physical, or sexual abuse exists. A negative school climate is also a risk factor for students who are the victims of bullies. In a qualitative study of bullying from the perspective of victimized children, their parents, and educators, Mishna (2004) reported that community factors are also indicators of victimization of children, with poverty, low socioeconomic status, being major variables.

Consequences of Bullying

Newman et al. (2005) identified victimization of bullying as a “chronic stressor,” and the health outcomes are the typical responses to a traumatic experience. Due et al. (2005) commented that “bullying is a precursor for health problems in childhood” (p. 128), and the few longitudinal studies that exist with respect to bullying support this notion. They also found that “exposure to bullying may cause poorer physical and psychological health in adolescents both consistent with common sense and scientifically plausible” (p. 128).

A common misconception about bullying is that physical bullying is more serious in its health affects than nonphysical bullying (Mishna, 2004). Although physical and nonphysical bullying are known to have a negative impact on children, Due et al. (2005) commented that nonphysical bullying has more long-term health consequences (e.g.,

internalizing grief, depression, anxiety, and decreased assertiveness). They conducted graded associations between incidence of bullying and health symptoms: The gradient was much steeper for psychological symptoms than for physical ones. Totten and Quigley (2003) stated that verbal and social bullying are much more difficult to detect than physical bullying. One teacher stated in an interview that “something you see as minor may be major to the kid” (Mishna, p. 238).

Children who are bullied and victimized are at high risk of various physical and mental health issues when they do not receive the appropriate support. Aside from the physical injury associated with bullying, there are mental and social health ramifications of bullying and victimization (Pepler & Craig, 2000; see Table 1).

Table 1

Mental and Social Health Outcomes Associated with Bullying

Mental/Social Health Outcomes Associated with Bullying	Mental/Social Health Outcomes Associated with Victimization
-conduct disorder (externalizing problems)	-internalizing problems
-aggression	-anxiety, depression
-delinquency (alcohol/drug abuse)	-somatization problems
-early dating experience	-withdrawn social behaviour, decreased assertiveness
-sexual harassment	-victimization by sexual harassment
-anxiety (internalizing problems), depression	-peer reputation as easily victimized
-academic problems* (i.e., absenteeism, cheating, school dropout)	-academic problems* (i.e., poor concentration, school dropout, increased absenteeism)
-negative peer reputation	-low self-esteem, lonely
-continued behavioural problems in adulthood	-sleeping problems, bedwetting

Adapted from Totten and Quigley (2003).

Due et al. (2005) supported the notion that exposure to bullying at this stage in life influences children’s health in a variety of pathways. For example, they identified social exclusion in the lack of social participation and attachment, weakened social competencies, and links to the future social and work prospects of the child. Newman et al. (2005) concluded that the effects of being bullied persist for many years. In particular,

victimization appears to do the most long-term psychological damage to children who felt isolated during school. It manifests as depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem.

Pepler and Craig (2000) agreed that children will not “just grow out of it (bullying behaviour)” (p. 4). In fact, they asserted that children who acquire power in the school environment by bullying will likely transfer such behaviour to their future in the form of sexual harassment, date violence, gang activity, and marital and child abuse. Newman et al. (2005) recognized that although girls tend to report more health symptoms associated with being bullied, there is no gender difference in terms of the actual health consequences of bullying.

The Role of the Parent(s)

Pepler and Craig (2000) noted that parents are often unaware of the extent of bullying and victimization problems. Parents may inadvertently support bullying and victimization behaviour if they model the use of power and aggression in the home or if they do not encourage independence and sociability in their children. Common misconceptions of parents are that “bullying is a normal part of growing up [that] children...will just grow out of it [or that] children are best left to resolve their own conflicts” (Pepler & Craig, 2000, p. 12). Lack of intervention relays to children that bullying is acceptable, and it does not recognize the risks that bullying inflicts on children.

In a longitudinal study on the effectiveness of antibullying policies in 32 Dutch elementary schools, Fekkes, Pijpers, and Verloove-Vanhorick (2005) found in their baseline data that parents rarely talk to their children about their bullying behaviour. Assumptions for this finding included being unawareness of the behaviour (i.e., not being

told by the teacher or the children themselves) or not knowing how to respond or intervene to incidences they knew of. Based on their findings, Fekkes et al. concluded that parents, in conjunction with school staff and pupils, need to be involved in cooperative efforts to reduce bullying behaviour in schools. Their findings supported the notion that children typically look to adults, namely, their parents, for help and support. When surveying a group of students on bullying behaviour, Fekkes et al. found that children admitted to speaking more freely to their parents than to their teachers about being bullied.

Mishna (2004) reported that the vast majority of children in their study admitted telling their friends that they had been bullied, whereas considerably fewer confided in their parents. Mishna reported one surveyed student as saying, "They (adults) think that if I go to the principal's office and tell, they won't do it any more, but they'll do it more because you told on them" (p. 239). Fear of retaliation, the belief that they are to blame and that telling an adult will simply not help are among reported reasons for children not disclosing bullying behaviour to their parents. Parents should be aware that children may be afraid to disclose information about bullying, so they should address these issues with their children by initiating communication about bullying with their child and participating in antibullying programs.

Parents should feel welcome and encouraged to report incidences of their children being bullied to the school system (Fekkes et al., 2005). However, some parents admitted that although they are angry to know that their children are being bullied, they do not want to embarrass their children by intervening. One parent commented that the child "has got to learn for herself" (as cited in Mishna, p. 239), and another parent reported that

bullying is “a part of growing up” (as cited in Mishna, p. 238). This researcher also suggested that reported victimization grossly underestimates the problem because children do not disclose all occurrences, focuses, and details of bullying.

The parent-child relationship influences children’s ability to manage in bullying situations, for example, in self-defense and conflict mediation. Parental involvement in antibullying programs is highly correlated with program success. Parents should keep informed of the school’s antibullying policy, and they should be involved at many levels when bullying incidents occur. Parents’ perceptions of bullying may affect their willingness to support or advocate for school-based prevention efforts (Dake et al., 2003).

Due et al. (2005) stated that children’s development into adolescence (i.e., changes and challenges concerning control over behaviour, psychological orientation, and social interaction) is influenced strongly by their relationship with their parents. In addition, they found that children are susceptible to the health effects of negative social interactions. Smith, Twemlow, and Hoover (1999) conducted a study in schools in Kansas with high suspension rates and particular problems with aggression. They evaluated the efficacy of implementing nonaggressive, conflict mediation skill training with adult (parent) mentors. They determined that parenting practices are linked to children’s use of bullying behaviour, that is, bullying is the result of a lack of support in the home. Smith et al. suggested that children who lack support and nurturing in the home are less likely to think symbolically or empathetically. Children who bully lack empathy for their victims because of their own sad experiences at home. They speculated that a parent-child relationship consisting of structure and consistency is more effective in

cognitive development, bullying prevention, and in dealing with bullying events effectively as they arise.

Newman et al. (2005) stressed that children's perceptions of victimization and isolation are the key factors: Different children respond very differently to similar bullying situations. Perceived isolation will reflect individual differences in coping styles. Thus, parents have the opportunity to provide resiliency to children, that is, the ability of children to overcome the negative effects of bullying to achieve positive outcomes (Totten & Quigley, 2003). Parent-facilitated resiliency, in conjunction with protective factors such as a healthy school climate, can minimize the damaging effects of bullying, including adverse health effects and subsequent disruptions in school achievement and engagement. Because there is an abundance of evidence to support the connection among bullying, parenting styles, and structure in the home, it is clear that the bullying intervention strategies programs are the most effective when they intimately involve the parents.

Are Parents to Blame?

Totten and Quigley (2003) commented that "in the vast majority of cases, the seeds of bullying behaviour and victimization are planted at home" (p. 18). Pepler and Craig (2000) reported that previous experiences are influential to children exhibiting bullying behaviour or to children being victimized by this behaviour. Socioeconomic status; family structure (i.e., intact vs. divorced/separated); parent-child relationships (i.e., supportive vs. abusive); attachment histories (i.e., paternal involvement, open communication, and support vs. intense closeness); child-rearing style (i.e., authoritative

vs. participatory); and parental discipline tactics (i.e., punitive vs. nonpunitive) are recognized predictors for bullying behaviour and victimization in school.

Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, Christie-Mizell (2003) investigated the relationship between interparental discord and elementary school-aged children's participation in bullying behaviour. This research pinpointed parenting styles and interparental relationships as casual agents in poor behaviour patterns in children because the family is the primary agent of socialization. Children learn and acquire behaviour by observing and imitating their parents. Whether positive or negative, direct or indirect, the messages that children receive from their parents are internalized by the children, shape their self-concept, and ultimately influence their behaviour.

Aggressiveness in parenting can serve as a model for children's subsequent behaviour. For example, overcontrolling and dominating parents tend to have aggressive children who harass their peers at school. In 1993, Rigby conducted a survey that measured children's tendencies to bully others or to be bullied by others, family function, and attitudes and relationships with parents. He used reliable scales to identify a link between dimensions of peer relating at school with respect to family and parental background factors. Rigby found that delinquent and aggressive children consistently report lower levels of satisfaction and a less cohesive and less expressive family life than their nondelinquent counterparts. Without this cohesive and expressive family life, children tend to lack interpersonal competence, which Rigby contended is a precondition for prosocial and cooperative behaviour.

Although parental warmth and engagement correlate positively with prosocial behaviour, children who are bullied tend to come from overprotective families that

prevent the children from developing fully as individuals. Rodkin and Hodges (2003) conducted a review of the literature on aggression and victimization in educational settings from an ecological perspective. Their goals were to determine how bullies and victims fit into their peer ecologies and how teachers and parents can impact bullying and victimization. They concluded that excessively overprotective parents put their children at increased risk of victimization. With particular relevance to children's home life, many family factors relate to bullying and victimization (see Table 2).

Table 2

Family Factors Related to Bullying Behaviour

Family Factors Related to Bullying	Family Factors Related to Victimization
-family stressors (i.e., financial, single parent, illness)	-overly protective parents
-lack of social support	-lack of independence in family
-high levels of parental conflict	-nonassertive parents
-lack of monitoring child's activities	-family stressors (i.e., divorce)
-inconsistent/overly harsh punishment	-overinvolvement by parents
-low levels of communication/intimacy	

Source: Pepler and Craig (2000, p. 23).

Another significant parenting variable that is linked to childhood bullying behaviour is inconsistent discipline in the home. Smith et al. (1999) noted that society is affluent and permissive and that consistency in discipline in the home is difficult to maintain. They acknowledged that "children seem to crave structure and rules in their lives" (p. 31). Children feel more secure when they know that they can trust what their parents say and that their parents will not vacillate in setting limits on their behaviour. The researchers recommended that parents consistently enforce and model good behaviour and conflict resolution in the home, which the children can take into the school environment. Bailey-Dick (2004) noted the disparity between parent discipline and school discipline. One principal in the Region of Waterloo stated, "A child is learning certain approaches on how to deal with a bully problem, [and] here's one way at home

and here's another way at school and it's conflicted, then we're having a real difficulty" (as cited in Bailey-Dick, p. 19).

Although the causes of bullying may be linked to the behaviour of the parents and low-quality parent-child relationships, children who establish quality interpersonal relationships with peers are less likely to bully. Rodkin and Hodges (2003) suggested that "peer relationships can serve as a lifeboat" for those who would be expected to use bullying behaviour based on their family situation. More research may untangle the causal link between child-parent relationships and bullying behaviour.

After evaluating the "Good Kid Sid" bullying prevention program in the Region of Waterloo in the fall of 2004, teachers and principals saw that there was a significant lack of parental support. Most principals cited the lack of support as a challenge as well as a source of frustration (Bailey-Dick, 2004). They explained that when children who bully at school are disciplined by the principals, the parents often will defend the children and downplay the bullying behaviour as "boys being boys" or "girls being girls" (as cited in Bailey-Dick, p. 19). Teachers and principals expressed dissatisfaction with parental involvement in school events and responses to letters sent home about their children's bullying behaviour. Teachers, school administrators, and parents should actively encourage children to report incidences of bullying behaviour in ways that will minimize their fear of retaliation and blaming, and assure the children that reporting incidence of bullying with help to end it.

Support for Parents of Children Who Bully/Who Are Victimized

Because bullying is a social ecological construct, parents require the cooperation of all community members (i.e., students, school administrators and teachers, and

community members) to support their children in an effort to eradicate bullying behaviour. Teachers can support parents because they have a great deal of power in helping to eliminate bullying behaviour. They are the leaders and diplomats in their classrooms, and they can influence childhood dynamics positively. Teachers can resolve conflicts and promote healthy relationships, including those between children and their parents (Rodkin & Hodges, 2003). The whole-school approach of an antibullying program permits this type of mediation.

Parents may lack the personal resources to deal with the problem of bullying, or they may be unaware of the issue because of denial; heightened emotion (i.e., anger, frustration, anxiety); and a dismissive nature (Pepler & Craig, 2000). Mishna (2004) recommended that social workers help parents understand and respond to their children's perspectives and feelings about bullying, and become more cognizant of their own attitudes and views, which may differ from those of their children.

Intervention Strategies

Due et al. (2005) commented that "intervention programs have a demonstrated effect on diminishing bullying within the school environment" (p. 131). The most effective program is a systemic approach to bullying prevention, that is, action must be taken on many levels in the social ecology of the child (Pepler & Craig, 2000). Olweus, who has done the most comprehensive research on bullying to date, is adamant that intervening at different levels can successfully diminish the level of bullying in the school environment (as cited in Due et al.). Because bullying behaviour does not happen in isolation, the intervention must extend beyond the children who bully and the children

who are victimized to encompass their peers, their parents, the school, and the community.

Change is required in all areas of society. With respect to parents, the strategies of the systemic approach include education, communication, and increased contact (Due et al., 2005). They suggested that “a whole-school policy is the keystone of anti-bullying [*sic*] interventions” (p. 32) and that the development of a statement of rights, roles, and responsibilities of all key players (i.e., students, parents, school staff and administrators, and community members) in the social ecology is necessary for any bullying prevention strategy to be efficacious.

In a review of several systematically evaluated, large-scale, school-based bullying intervention programs, Smith et al. (2003) supported the use of a whole-school approach because it “emphasizes the democratic involvement of all school members devising and maintaining the policy and has the advantage of potentially integrating numerous components of an anti-bullying strategy” (p. 591). With the integration of a new element into the school community, attitudinal change must precede behavioural change. Therefore, a systemic and long-term approach through promotion and communication is the most effective in improving the school climate.

Bullying Prevention Programming in the Region of Waterloo

In 1998, the ROWPHD identified bullying as a priority in its Violence Prevention/Mental Health and Youth Health Programs. In 1999, it began a pilot project based on the Blueprints for Violence Prevention Program (Centre for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 1999). This pilot study was implemented in four schools within

the Region of Waterloo, and a survey was conducted with the students, teachers, and parents for evaluative purposes.

Building on the evaluation of the pilot study and by adapting a bullying prevention tool used by the B.C. Ministry of Education, the ROWPHD, in partnership with the Waterloo Region District School Board and the Waterloo Catholic District School Board, developed “Imagine...A School Without Bullying: A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention.” The purpose of the resource is to help schools develop and implement a detailed action plan to create a school climate and a culture that strengthen children’s physical, social, and psychological safety in the schools and subsequently reduce the incidence of bullying. The three main objectives of “Imagine...” are:

1. To provide the school community with information about bullying.
2. To provide a process/framework for creating a school plan for bullying prevention.
3. To provide strategies for students, parents, and staff to respond to bullying.

The 10-step program was designed as a whole-school approach to bullying prevention that documents the most effective ways to maintain a supportive, respectful, and healthy school climate. The steps of the program are:

Step 1: Engage Commitment of School Staff

Step 2: Establish a School Climate Committee

Step 3: Involve Parents

Step 4: Involve Students

Step 5: Create and/or Amend a School Statement for a Respectful School Environment

Step 6: Build a Supervision Plan

Step 7: Construct a School Climate Enhancement Plan

Step 8: Develop a Response Plan

Step 9: Promote and Implement the School Plan

Step 10: Monitor and Reassess the School Plan

Although parents are encouraged to be involved at all levels, “Step 3: Involve Parents” is the most relevant to parents. The program examines the importance of involving parents by meeting with them, providing them with support materials, having them serve on school climate committees, and outlining strategies for their sustained involvement.

Methodology

Survey Distribution/Collection

Approximately 50 schools in the Waterloo Catholic District School Board are involved in the “Imagine... A School Without Bullying” initiative. These schools initially were divided into 3 cohorts, and 5 schools from each cohort are participating in a 3-year evaluation process that began in April 2005. The evaluation utilized the “Safe School Survey for Parents,” which was developed and validated by the Canadian Public Health Association and the National Crime Prevention Strategy. This survey, which was adapted from a tool developed by Totten et al. (2004b) for the West Vancouver School District of B.C., measures demographic information and children’s perceptions of safety at school, on the way to and from school, and in the community. In addition, the survey measures children’s experience with bullying, where and when bullying occurs, and the parents’ knowledge and perceptions of extant antibullying strategies. Parents were also invited to share their recommendations for the school to reduce the incidence of bullying.

This report represented the baseline findings from five elementary schools representing the Region of Waterloo: Sir Edgar Bauer (Waterloo), St. Paul (Kitchener), St. Brigid (Ayr), St. Margaret of Scotland (Cambridge), and St. Nicholas (Waterloo). The Health Determinants, Planning, and Evaluation Division of the ROWPHD conducted an ethical review of this study. Upon ethics approval, the researcher distributed surveys to students in Grades 4 to 7 to take home to their parent(s) or guardians, along with a consent form (see Appendix A) asking for their participation to complete the survey. There was an incentive of a pizza luncheon for the class with the greatest number of returned parent surveys.

Postage-paid envelopes were provided with each survey, and parents were given the option of having their children return the sealed envelopes to the school or mailing them back to the ROWPHD. The surveys that the children brought to school were collected by the teachers, passed on to administration, and then returned to staff at the ROWPHD. Upon receipt of the surveys, staff at the ROWPHD entered the data using Teleform, a document-capture software package, which scanned each survey and directly inputting the data into SPSS statistical software.

The intent of this evaluation was to provide baseline data about the demographics of the parents and their children (e.g., age, gender, race, literacy, etc.). In addition, the evaluation intended to measure the parents' perceptions of their children's sense of safety; children's involvement in and victimization by bullying; the reasons for bullying behaviour (e.g., racial discrimination, sexual harassment); and parents' knowledge and perceptions of the school.

Quantitative Analysis

SPSS statistical software was used to conduct a quantitative analysis of the parent survey data. Descriptive analysis of the data was achieved by utilizing the frequency function of the Teleform program. Inferential analysis of the categorical data (i.e., examination of the data for significant relationships) was achieved by utilizing cross-tabulation and chi-square test functions. Because of the nature of the chi-square test, a minimum expected frequency of 5 must be obtained to meet the assumptions of the test. When this was not the case with the raw data, data were recoded and grouped for analysis. For example, when determining a relationship between gender and victimization of physical bullying, the minimum expected frequency was less than 5 in 6 cells. Thus, the categories “every week” and “many times a week” were combined to meet the assumptions of the statistical test and to describe significant relationships in as much detail as possible. This example would be reported as the child being victimized “at least once a week.”

Limitations of the Study

At times, the data could not be recoded any further because parents did not report behaviour at certain frequencies. For example, when comparing students’ grades to the incidence of sexual harassment by spreading rumours, parents only reported such behaviour “once or twice a month.” When data were run in the chi-square test, 4 cells had expected counts less than 5, thus violating an assumption of the test. However, a strong statistical relationship existed (i.e., $p = .019$; $p < .05$). In cases such as this, the relationships were reported as significant, but they had to be interpreted with caution because the sample size from which the inference was drawn was very small. A

limitation to this study was that the response rates to certain questions were minimal to draw meaningful inferences because of the small sizes of the subgroups within the sample (e.g., race).

The question on the self-identified race of the parents was handled in a specific way for analysis. Parents explained how they identify their own race, and for the purposes of this evaluation, the children were assumed to be of the same race as their parents. In addition, self-identified race was separated into two categories, namely, White and ethnic minorities because White was reported by the vast majority of respondents, so all other reported races were grouped together for analysis.

With respect to the grades of the children, because the vast majority of respondents were in Grades 4 to 7, only the children in those grades were analyzed with respect to bullying behaviour. In addition, in regard to the question when their children started attending a particular school, children in their first year were separated from all other children to facilitate the analysis of the link between bullying and students being new to the school.

All data were reported by the parents. At times, parents may have chosen not to respond to certain questions in the survey, perhaps due to time constraints, a lack of understanding of the question, or by accident. This resulted in missing data, so valid percentages were used for reporting. These data were rounded to the nearest whole percentage. As a result, data presented in findings may not sum to 100%.

Qualitative Analysis

Parents were given the opportunity to offer recommendations to improve bullying intervention strategies in the schools. These open-ended responses were transcribed into

an Excel spreadsheet and imported into QSR N-VIVO qualitative analysis software. Data were then coded into different nodes and tree nodes to classify and group the information. The parents' recommendations were synthesized to determine if the parents are using best practices in their approach to bullying prevention.

Study Sample

All data were reported by the parents of students in Grades 4 to 7 in five Catholic elementary schools in the Region of Waterloo: Sir Edgar Bauer, St. Margaret, St. Brigid, St. Nicholas, and St. Paul.

Demographics

Schools that were represented. The five samples schools were representative of various demographic locations (i.e., geographic and socioeconomic regions) in the Region of Waterloo. Five hundred and fifty-two questionnaires of 904 distributed to the five schools were returned, producing a response rate of 61%. Table 3 illustrates the proportion of responses from each school.

Table 3

Response Rate by School

School	Percentage ($N = 552$)
Sir Edgar Bauer	26%
St. Brigid	11%
St. Margaret	24%
St. Nicholas	22%
St. Paul	17%

One open-ended question that asked the parents what else their children's school can do to prevent bullying closed the survey. With respect to the number of returned surveys, the response rates for the parents from each school are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4

Open-Ended Question Response Rates by School

Sir Edgar Bauer (Waterloo)	St. Paul (Kitchener)
Sir Edgar Bauer	43%
St. Brigid	35%
St. Margaret	40%
St. Nicholas	38%
St. Paul	37%

The sample equally represented boys (49%) and girls (50%). Almost half (44%) of the students had attended the same school since Kindergarten. Though the vast majority of students had attended a particular school for at least one year (92%), 7% of children were new to the school. The vast majority of students (88%) spoke English as their first language, with Polish (3%) and Spanish (3%) being the next highest first languages. Most of the questionnaires (83%) were returned by the children's mothers; 15% of them were returned by fathers. This disparity may have indicated the need for more involvement from fathers or father figures.

The majority of parents (95%) reported that they could read and write easily in English, and 4% could only "somewhat" read and write in English. More than three quarters of the parents (77%) were born and raised in Canada, and 22% have only lived here for only part of their lives. No distinct patterns showed how long these parents have lived in Canada; responses varied between 2 weeks and 37 years. Most respondents (82%) self-identified their race as "White," with "Other" representing the next highest race (11%), followed by "Latin American" (3%) and "South-East Asian" (1%). For those who responded "Other," 88% did not identify a race, and 5% reported "Canadian."

Descriptive Analysis

Frequency of certain behaviours and certain contexts of behaviour (as perceived by the parents) were determined through a descriptive analysis (see Appendix B [Tables B1 to B10] for full details). These data will act as a baseline for the evaluation of the “Imagine...” initiative. At the one-year interval after this initial data collection, data will be collected again to determine any changes in the frequency of bullying behaviour, and thus, the efficacy of the tool.

Perceptions of Child Safety

Parents were asked to report if their children feel safe in transit to school, at school, and in the community. About half of the parents responded that their children “always” feel safe at school, in transit to and from school, and in the neighbourhood. Approximately 10% of parents felt that their children are “not really” or only “somewhat” safe from bullying in these areas (see Table B1). In future, this information may be useful to cross-reference with a survey of students to determine if their parents are aware of the students’ feelings about bullying.

Parents also were asked to report on their fears of certain types and focuses of bullying behaviour toward their child, such as the child being the target of physical abuse, sexual, or verbal abuse, being teased or excluded from groups, gossip or racially discriminated against. The greatest proportion of parents (47%) feared that their children experience verbal bullying at least “sometimes.” The next greatest proportions (i.e., 38% and 34%, respectively) expected that their children will be bullied (i.e., rumours and gossiping) and physically. Table B2 illustrates the particular foci of the parents’ concerns about bullying behaviour that involves their children.

Bullying Frequency

The researcher asked the parents to share their honest thoughts and feelings about the frequency of bullying behaviour and/or victimization of their children in the 4 weeks prior to the survey. The parents were provided with definitions of four types of bullying behaviour (i.e., physical, verbal, social, and electronic bullying), and they were asked to reflect on the incidence of these types as they related to their children

Types of Bullying

With respect to the frequency of their children being bullied in each of the 4 ways “at least once” in the 4 weeks prior to the survey, the greatest proportion of students were bullied socially (35%). The next most significant proportion of students were bullied verbally (35%) “at least once a month.” Physical and electronic bullying were the least most reported contexts of bullying (i.e., 18% and 5%, respectively). Table B3 describes the incidence of students being bullied in the four possible ways. Although most parents (93%) report that their children had not stayed home from school to avoid being bullied, several (4%) reported their children doing so “once or twice” (per month).

Racial Discrimination

Parents were asked to report on the frequency of their children being racially discriminated against by someone at school in the 4 weeks prior to the survey. The vast majority (i.e., more than 90%) were “never” bullied in this way. Very few children (3%) were reported as being bullied in this way in the sample. Table B4 illustrates the frequency of racial discrimination in the schools.

Sexual Harassment

Parents were also asked to report on the frequency of their child being sexually harassed by someone at school in the 4 weeks prior to the survey. The greatest proportion of students were reported as being victims of “name-calling” (13%) and “being told they don’t look masculine/feminine enough” (7%). The next highest proportions of students were victims of “crude comments” being made toward them (5%). On average, almost 10% of parents responded “don’t know” to the question if their children were being bullied in this way, indicating the need for parents to become more aware of bullying behaviour, particularly sexual innuendo, to their children. Table B5 illustrates the frequency of sexual harassment in the schools.

Focus of Bullying Behaviour

Parents were asked the frequency of certain contexts of bullying (e.g., bullying based on religion, race, physical/mental ability, gender, etc.) in the past 4 weeks. Bullying behaviour that focuses on physical appearance (i.e., height and body shape) or academic difficulty is the most prevalent (14% of parents report that their children were bullied for both of these reasons “at least once a month”). Children reported being bullied because of their weight (12%), clothing style (10%), or physical weakness (7%) “at least once a month.” This information is important because it can assist in the development of bullying prevention programs that target the most reasons for bullying (e.g., if most children bully because of their victims’ physical appearance, programs can focus on respecting individual differences). Table B6 outlines the frequency of certain bullying foci in the school.

Children Who Bully Others

Parents were asked to report on the incidence of their children actively bullying others. Consistent with the responses from the parents of the children who are bullied, social and verbal bullying were identified as the most common ways that children bully “at least once a month” (10% and 9%, respectively). It is important to note that fewer parents reported that their children manifest bullying behaviour. Most parents viewed their children as the victims of bullying. This perspective may signify that parents may not be aware that their children engage in active bullying, or they do not want to accept that their children may be the perpetrators of bullying behaviour. It may be useful to compare these data with data from the children to identify any discrepancies. Table B7 describes the parent-reported frequency of the children’s bullying behaviour in each of the four possible ways in the 4 weeks prior to the survey.

Racial Discrimination Against Peers

Parents were asked to report on the frequency of their children racially discriminating against their peers in the 4 weeks prior to the survey. The vast majority (i.e., almost 95%) report that their children “never” participate in this behaviour. Nearly 5% of parents responded that they “don’t know” if their children are doing so, identifying the need for parents to communicate more openly and more often with their children about bullying. Table B8 illustrates the frequency of racial discrimination.

Where do Children Bully?/Where are Bullied?

Parents were asked to respond where they feel that bullying, discrimination, and harassment of their children occur. According to their responses, children reported being bullied the most often (38% are bullied at least “once a month”) in outdoor areas around

the school (e.g., playground, blacktop, areas where recess and lunch breaks occurs). The areas that include the way to and from school, classrooms, and hallways were equally represented as the next most common places where children are bully or are bullied (18% each). It would be constructive for teachers and school staff to increase awareness and provide more supervision in these areas. Table B9 illustrates the frequency of bullying behaviour in a myriad of locations.

When Are Children Bullied?

Parents were also asked to identify the times of the day or week when their children are at the most at risk for being bullied. At a rate of “at least once a month,” almost half of children in the sample (47%) are bullied “during school breaks” (e.g., recess, lunch, spare periods). The next highest proportion of students are bullied “after school” (26%) or “during classes” (19%). Much the same as being aware of where bullying occurs, teachers and school staff must be aware of when bullying happens to improve awareness and supervision of students at those times. Table B10 details the times when children are at the most at risk for being bullied, as perceived by the parents.

General Parental Awareness

Rules and Regulations

When asked if they were aware of the rules and regulations pertaining to student behaviour in school, more than half of parents (56%) responded with “definitely true.” Thirty-five percent of parents indicated that it was “mostly true” or “sometimes true.” Although the majority of parents were at least somewhat aware of the rules and regulations, a considerable number were not. Six percent (6%) of parents said this was “never true,” and 2% said “hardly ever true.” These data identified the need for improved

knowledge and awareness of school policies, which could translate into more parental involvement in the schools.

Behaviour Enforcement

When asked to comment on the active enforcement of rules regarding student behaviour, the majority (77%) of parents said that this was “always true” or “mostly true.” Sixteen percent (16%) reported that enforcement of student behaviour rules was “sometimes true,” implying inconsistent discipline of the children. Several parents (7%) reported that the active enforcement of rules encompassing proper student behaviour were “never true” or “hardly ever true.” These data identified a need for more consistent behaviour enforcement with respect to bullying. Unrecognized incidences of bullying are assumed when behaviour enforcement is not imposed, thus encouraging bullying behaviour.

Appropriate Action Taken upon Incident Report (from Child)

Approximately three quarters (74%) of the parents reported that appropriate action was “always” or “often” taken when their children reported an incident of bullying. Seventeen percent (17%) of parents said that actions were “sometimes” taken. Several parents (7%) said that this was “never true” or “hardly ever true.” Again, these data revealed the need for more consistent behaviour enforcement with respect to bullying.

Active Incident Reporting from the Parents to the School

A significant proportion of the parents (14%) reported that they “never” report incidence of bullying, sexual harassment, and racial discrimination to the school authorities. Another 8% said that they “hardly ever” report such incidence to the school.

These responses illustrated the need for parents to communicate with the school regarding bullying. Parents need to be aware of the efficacy of reporting bullying behaviour. Only two thirds of the parents (65%) responded that they report such incidents “always” or “most of the time.” The remaining 8% said they report bullying, sexual harassment and racial discrimination “sometimes.”

Satisfaction with School’s Bullying Prevention Strategy

Almost three quarters of the parents (74%) reported feeling satisfied “definitely” or “most of the time” with the steps that their children’s school is taking to prevent bullying, harassment, and discrimination. Fifteen percent (15%) were “sometimes” satisfied. Eight percent (8%) of parents were “not at all” or “not really” satisfied with the schools’ bullying prevention initiatives. A more thorough survey may provide more data on parental dissatisfaction with bullying prevention initiatives. These data are encouraging because they show that the majority of parents are happy with current prevention programs. However, the aforementioned data on bullying incidence, in conjunction with the number of parents who are not satisfied with prevention initiatives, leave “room for improvement” in bullying prevention.

Findings and Discussion

Analysis found a relationship emerged between the individual characteristics of children (e.g. gender, grade level, race, and length of time as a student in the school) and those who are bullied the most often, the most victimized, those who feel the safest, and those whose parents communicate best with the school.

For reporting purposes, only students in Grades 4 to 7 were considered because 98% of the sample came from these grades. In addition, all non-White respondents were

grouped as ethnic minorities because the majority of respondents (81%) reported their self-identified race as White. This was necessary because there was no clear majority with respect to race within the non-White group. Children were assumed to be of the same race as their parents for the purposes of this analysis.

Physical Bullying

Bullying

The most significant finding was that boys are almost five times more likely than girls to bully other children physically at least once a month (9% vs. 2%; $p < .05$). A greater proportion of girls had not been reported as physically bullying at all in the last month, as compared to boys (93% vs. 82%; $p < .05$). This finding was consistent with the literature in that boys typically engage in physically aggressive behaviour, whereas girls perpetuate social bullying behaviour (e.g. spreading rumours or excluding others; Due et al, 2005). No significant pattern existed among the grades; the children's being new to the school (i.e., enrollment status); or the children's membership in a racial minority and rates of active physical bullying.

Victimization

Survey findings showed a significant difference between genders and victimization in physical bullying; males are more often the victims of physical bullying than girls are. At a rate of once or twice a month, boys were far more likely than girls to be bullied physically (i.e., 21% vs. 8%; $p < .05$). Twice as many boys than girls are bullied physically at least once a week (i.e., 3% vs. 1.5%; $p > .05$). The inference is that girls are less likely to be bullied physically than boys (87% of girls vs. 68% of boys; $p < .05$).

The researcher found a statistically significant relationship between race and victimization of physical bullying, which contrasts findings in the literature. The link suggested that more than twice as many parent-identified White children are the victims of physical bullying when compared to non-White ethnic minorities (19% vs. 8%; $p < .05$). This finding should be interpreted with caution because there was a sizeable difference in the size of the two categories of race, with the White proportion representing over 80% of the sample. There was no significant link between the incidence of physical bullying victimization and the factors of grade level and the child's enrollment status.

Verbal Bullying

Bullying

More boys than girls initiate verbal bullying behaviour. Boys are more than twice as likely as girls to perpetuate verbal bullying at least once a month (14% vs. 6%; $p < .05$). Ten percent (10%) more girls than boys are "never in 4 weeks" involved in active verbal bullying ($p < .05$). This finding was consistent with the literature in that boys are more often viewed as being involved in this bullying behaviour (Due et al., 2005). Almost ten percent (10%) of parents responded that they "don't know" about the incidence of their children being verbal bullies; therefore, the potential exists for the results to be underrepresented. There was no significant difference between the rates of active verbal bullying and the factors of grade level and child's enrollment status.

Victimization

Significant differences existed between boys and girls with respect to verbal victimization. Significantly more boys (27%) than girls (18%) are bullied verbally “once or twice a month,” and more than double (8%) the number of boys than girls (3%; $p < .05$) are bullied verbally “every week.” The majority of girls had been bullied verbally in the 4 weeks, but a significantly smaller percentage boys had not (i.e., 70% vs. 54%; $p < .05$). There was no significant link between the incidence of verbal bullying victimization and the factors of grade level or the child’s enrollment status.

Social Bullying

No significant difference emerged with respect to social bullying (e.g. exclusion, rumours/gossip, etc.) either by victimization or by active bullying with respect to gender, grade, race, or student’s time at the school. This finding was inconsistent with the literature in that girls typically perpetuate or fall victim to social bullying behaviour more than boys (Totten & Quigley, 2003). This result may be a function of the lack of parental awareness of this type of behaviour, especially because they tend to overlook nonphysical incidence of bullying. It would be advantageous to conduct a survey of the students themselves to identify discrepancies between parent and student data. It would also identify the need for increased parental awareness.

Electronic Bullying

Bullying

There was no significant relationship between gender and active electronic bullying. This finding was inconsistent with the literature because it suggested that girls are the most often involved in nonphysical bullying that is more social in nature.

Electronic bullying may be interpreted as being social in that children use electronic communication to ostracize each other in an environment where empathy is masked (i.e., no visual or audible way to detect harm). There was no significant link between rates of active electronic bullying with respect to the individual factors of grade, race, or the child's enrollment status.

Victimization

More than three times more girls (7%) than boys (2%) are bullied electronically "once or twice a month" or "every week" ($p < .05$). This finding was consistent with the literature in that electronic bullying is largely social in nature and that girls are typically bullied the most often in this way (Totten & Quigley, 2003). More boys (91%) than girls (86%) had not been bullied electronically in the past 4 weeks. There was no significant difference between the rates of victimization by electronic bullying and the factors of grade level, race, or the child's enrollment status.

Racial Discrimination

Bullying

There was no significant link between the incidence of racial discrimination and the factors of gender, grade level, race, or the child's enrollment status.

Victimization

Survey findings showed that children who belong to racial minorities are four times more likely than White children to be left out or treated badly at school because of their country of origin (i.e., 2% vs. 0.5%; $p < .05$). This finding should be interpreted with caution because the sample size was small and did not meet all of the assumptions of the statistical test. Another reason to interpret the physical bullying findings with caution

is that children who belong to racial minorities are six times more likely than White children to be teased or made fun of because of their race/culture at least once a month (i.e., 6% vs. 1%; $p < .05$). This did not follow the aforementioned pattern that White children are more likely to be the target of children who bully physically more so than ethnic minorities. At any rate, the fact that racial discrimination exists within the sample schools points to the social ecological model of bullying (Totten & Quigley, 2003), with particular relevance to family and individual factors as contributing to children being adversely affected by bullying behaviour. This finding identifies a need for an improved school climate (another factor in the social ecological model) so that it is accepting and inviting of multiculturalism. There is no significant link between the incidence of being racially discriminated against and the factors of gender, grade level, or the child being new to the school.

Sexual Harassment

Bullying

There was no significant pattern between active sexual harassment rates and the student factors of gender, grade, and the child's enrollment status.

Victimization

A statistically significant difference existed between boys and girls with respect to sexual harassment in the form of name calling (e.g. calling child "gay," "fag," "lesbian," etc.). Five percent (5%) of boys were reported as being harassed in this way at least once a week, but less than 1% of girls were victimized ($p < .05$). Seventeen percent (17%) of boys were harassed in this way "once or twice a month," but only 11% of girls experienced it. This finding was consistent with the fact that boys are bullied verbally

more often than girls. More girls (83%) than boys (70%; $p < .05$) are “never” exposed to this type of harassment.

On the other hand, with respect to victimization of sexual harassment, significant differences existed between grades for certain behaviours. Grade 6 students experienced a greater incidence (26%) of name-calling with reference to sexual orientation at least once a month (e.g., being called “fag,” “gay,” or “lesbian,” etc.) than did students in Grades 4 (10%), 5 (15%), and 7 (16%) with respect to this behaviour ($p < .05$).

Two other significant differences existed; however, these should be interpreted with caution because the sample size was relatively small (i.e., fewer than 20 people). Students in Grade 7 were the most-reported victims of sexual rumours or sexual notes/graffiti at least once a month, which was more than the combined incidence in Grades 4, 5, and 6 (i.e., 7% vs. 1%, 2%, 3%, respectively; $p < .05$). In addition, a significant difference existed in that the students in Grades 6 and 7 experienced almost 10 times more sexual advances or being looked at in a sexual way than did the students in Grades 3 and 4 (i.e., 9% vs. 1%; $p < .05$). No significant links existed between being sexually harassed, being new to the school, or belonging to a racial minority.

Bullying of Other Focuses

Bullying

No evidence from the data analysis suggested that the factors of gender, grade, child’s enrollment status, or membership in an ethnic minority influence the rates of active bullying.

Victimization

The social ecological model of bullying (Totten & Quigley, 2003) identified individual factors as contributing factors to children being bullied by their peers. It is not surprising that children tend to bully each other based on individual factors. For example, rates of gender-specific bullying (e.g., being treated badly at school because of gender) are significantly different between boys and girls. Survey findings showed that girls are four times more likely than boys to be bullied because of their gender (8% vs. 2%; $p < .05$). Boys are more than three times more likely than girls to be bullied at least once a month because of physical weakness (10% vs. 3%; $p < .05$).

Significant findings with respect to other foci of bullying existed, and all of them were linked to individual differences among students. However, these results must be interpreted with caution because the sample size was small. Students in Grades 4 and 5 were more than three times as likely to be bullied because of a disability other than physical or mental (e.g., learning) than students in Grades 6 and 7 (i.e., 17% vs. 5%; $p < .05$). In addition, students in Grades 4 and 5 who found school difficult were more than three times as likely as students in Grades 6 and 7 to be bullied (i.e., 20% vs. 6%; $p < .05$). There was no significant relationship between the rate of victimization of bullying of other foci, and the individual student factors of gender, grade, race, or the child's enrollment status.

Feelings of Safety in the School

Upon analysis, the researcher found no significant link between feelings of safety within the school, on the way to and from school, or in the community and the individual factors of gender, grade, race, or the child's enrollment status.

Parental Communication with the School

There was no significant relationship between parent communication with the school and the individual student factors of gender, grade and race. This finding was based on the parents' knowledge of the rules related to behaviour, awareness of enforcement, reporting, and perceived outcomes of reporting; $p > .05$.

There was a significant difference when parents of students who were new to the school were asked if they report bullying, sexual harassment, and/or discrimination to the school. More than double the parents of established students (i.e., students attending the institution for more than one year) reported that they "hardly ever," "sometimes," or "often" report such behaviour, as compared to the parents of new students (20% vs. 41%; $p < .05$). More parents of new students responded that they "always" report such behaviour (51% vs. 45%, $p < .05$).

In addition, a significant difference existed with respect to communication with the school when parents were asked, "Have you heard about rules related to student behaviour at your child's school?" More parents of children who were established in the school responded that their knowledge of these rules is "hardly true," "somewhat true," or "often true." That is, 38% of parents whose children are not first-year students in the school do not have concrete knowledge of the rules about bullying, as compared to 22% of parents of first-year students ($p < .05$). More parents of new students were "definitely" aware of these rules (61%), as compared to the parents of established students (56%). This finding suggested that awareness of the rules about bullying may be stressed more in recent years to parents of new students.

Parents' Constructive Recommendations

One open-ended question in the survey gave parents the opportunity to express their thoughts and ideas about what their children's school can do to prevent or reduce bullying, harassment, and discrimination. A verbatim sampling of parents' comments, organized by theme, is located in Appendix C. For the purposes of analysis, it must be noted that some parents had more than one comment and more than one type of suggestion for improvement. Therefore, the number of comments does not necessarily reflect the number of parents who responded to this question. Although the parents offered a myriad of suggestions, very few were focused on a systemic, whole-school approach, which Pepler and Craig (2000) noted is the most effective way to reduce or eliminate bullying behaviour.

Many parents identified the various levels at which to accomplish bullying prevention (e.g., parents, students, teachers, etc.), but did not recognize the need for reciprocation among these levels, which is documented with unmatched efficacy (Totten & Quigley, 2003). Due et al. (2005) suggested that "a whole-school policy is the keystone of anti-bullying interventions" (p. 32) and that a statement of rights, roles and responsibilities of all key players in the social ecology (i.e., students, parents, teachers, principal, school staff, community members) is necessary for program efficacy.

Themes of Comments

Several themes emerged during the qualitative analysis. The majority of comments (87%) were constructive suggestions that could help to resolve the bullying problem. Table 5 shows the subthemes of the constructive comments. These recommendations were significant because they identified weaknesses in the intervention

or, failing that, misconceptions that parents have about ideal prevention strategies (e.g., the efficacy of “harsh” punishments). Some comments did not answer the question (i.e., what can be done in the school to reduce or eliminate bullying, discrimination, and harassment). The remaining comments were either positive comments pertaining to the school and existing programs (23), negative comments without constructive ideas for change (5), recognition of the cause of bullying without constructive ideas for change (13), or no comment (4).

Table 5

Themes of Parents' Comments

Constructive Comment	Frequency
More supervision	32
Education (i.e., child, parent, or teacher)	68
Harsher punishments	52
Communication	51
Promotion (e.g. assemblies, posters)	20
Counselling for children who are victimized	8
School uniforms	2
Other	46

More Supervision

A common theme that parents expressed is that more adult supervision is necessary in the school setting. “Outdoors,” “blacktop,” “recess,” “playgrounds,” “lunch hour,” “school bus,” “halls,” “washrooms,” and “before and after school” were identified as areas that are under-supervised. Parents suggested that teachers, principals, educational assistants, child and youth workers, parents, and volunteers be potential supervisors in these areas. One respondent was adamant that teachers are the best option for a supervisory role: “More yard supervisors...teachers need to be more involved, not EAs (educational assistants) and child and youth workers who hardly know the children - they cannot see changes in kids’ behaviour efficiently, they do not see them enough.” One

respondent recognized that the need for supervision is not exclusive to one area:

“Teachers/Volunteers need to be more visible both inside and outside of the school, i.e. recess, lunch breaks.”

With respect to the actions of the supervisors, several comments were made. Two respondents made constructive comments about adult supervision: “Be proactive while on yard supervision, students often use lookouts to disperse others when a teacher approaches.” “Be more aware of the social behaviours and cliques that occur.”

Education

The most prevalent theme that emerged is the need for further education of students, teachers, and parents.

Education for students. More than half (51%) of the suggestions were targeted at students. The foci of these messages varied among the respondents. One of the most common was teaching children about individual differences (e.g. cultural, racial, sexual orientation, etc.) and promoting acceptance and tolerance of these differences. Another dominant theme was the need for education and the development of personal life skills such as assertiveness, conflict mediation, and self-esteem to deal with aggression and stress. Finally, comments about providing education about bullying policies and the awareness of consequences of actions were offered: “Continue to teach about respect, individual differences, self-esteem, peer pressure, and group mentality.” “Teach more life skills - determination, assertiveness, how to deal with aggression, stress, have discussion groups in each class...one-on-one with teacher/students.” “Continue to educate the students on what bullying is, and why it happens.”

Education for teachers. Several parents commented on the need for teachers to be more educated in dealing with misbehaviour and discipline: “Train teachers more on dealing with behavioural issues... teachers need to remain professional, respectful, and stop yelling.” “How to deal with these events in an effective manner.” Many teachers recognized negativity and verbal abuse in members of their profession and felt that this is an area where remedial education is necessary, for example, “more training on psychological impact.” One respondent stated that “teachers (need) to be better role-models and more positive and energetic in their work so the children will (in turn) act more positive.”

Education for parents. “I think the key is education, but the education can’t just stop at the students. I think parents need education, too, on how to help our children deal with the situation they experience at school.” Parents recognized the need for more education on bullying and bullying prevention strategies. Although many of them did not recognize the necessary focus of the education they desire, several indicated that they need education about “what to do when this happens” and the resources to help with the problem, such as “the names of agencies or groups who can help (child) with bullying.” Some parents acknowledged that parents may be the casual agent of students’ bullying behaviour, stating that “a child learns to bully by being bullied him or herself” and that “bullying is a sign of other problems, if parents would react to their children’s outbursts (appropriately), bullying would not be. Make parents be parents.”

Harsher Punishments

When asked to recommend management strategies for bullying in their children's school, parents expressed the view that they wanted to see harsher punishments. Many parents were strong supporters of the "zero tolerance" policy:

The school can have a 'no-tolerance' policy where if anyone caught or reported to be bullying should be suspended for a few days from school so that they realize that this behaviour will not be tolerated at any cost.

Respondents agreed on "punish(ing) the people involved and make them understand how wrong and hurtful their actions are." Some parents recognized the long-term effect of bullying behaviour and the necessity of punishment in the prevention of future adversity: "Children caught in the act of bullying need help, and such students should be given professional help before they graduate to hardened criminals."

Numerous respondents had concerns about the consistency and severity of punishment, recognizing consistent enforcement and more severe punishments (e.g., suspension, expulsion, lost bus privileges) as deterrents of bullying behaviour. However, the literature on practical approaches to reducing the impact of bullying found that "aggressive, angry (harsh) punishments are likely to be ineffective and may even encourage further bullying" (Pearce & Thompson, 1998, p. 529). Therefore, even though parents agree that action must be taken, they need to reconsider their ideas about punishment so that it is more formative. Pearce and Thompson suggested that "by far, the most effective punishment (for bullying) is to insist that the bully make amends for the distress that has been caused" (p. 529) rather than suspend, expel, or ground the children who engage in bullying behaviour.

Communication

Communication is another common theme that emerged from the qualitative analysis of the parent surveys. Communication involves encouraging children to communicate their needs to adults, and adults must communicate the appropriate content with respect to bullying. Parents must provide safe and open channels of communication so that their children can express their concerns about bullying behaviour and report incidence of bullying without fear. One respondent reported that adults should “always listen when a child comes forward to share information. If the child feels brave enough to discuss it, it must be given time to investigate the claim!” Another reported that it is “very important to inform the kids all the time about this kind of problem (bullying) and for them to be aware and make them feel confident to talk in case of any problem.” One parent summarized the comments of all the respondents: “Encourage communication (from the child) about bullying, harassment and discrimination, even if in doubt.”

As for communicating content, one specific intervention strategy arose:

Teach children exactly what is considered to be bullying (i.e., more than once, on purpose); teach what tattling is, teach steps in how to deal with bullying (i.e., 1. Ask other child to stop; 2. Tell how it feels; 3. If unsuccessful, tell adults (do not retaliate); 4. If they see bullying, tell adults (do not tattle). Children need to know if it is bullying; otherwise, don't tattle.

Promotion

Several parents listed venues to promote bullying prevention activities and education as their constructive feedback to the problem. “Having lots of school assemblies, putting up posters around the school,” “workshops,” and “guest speakers

(police?)” are examples of the ideas offered by parents. These strategies are aligned with the social ecological model of bullying (Totten & Quigley, 2003) in that they must involve various levels of the community (e.g., police officers). Classroom discussions, seminars, question-and-answer periods, guest speakers, and videos are other ways to promote anti-bullying interventions.

Other Recommendations from Parents

Many constructive responses could not be grouped easily into themes, so the researcher classified them as “other recommendations.” One respondent suggested modifying the study to include younger children: “This research should include younger grades as well. If calling a child ‘fat’ or teasing him is considered bullying, then my child has been a victim since Grade One.” Another recommendation involved an emphasis on program strategies specific to those areas outside of the school: “Somehow address bullying/harassment that occurs on the way home from school. Encourage/help the students form buddy groups to walk home. Openly discuss incidents of bullying/harassment that occur on the way home.” One respondent emphasized the need for more effective reporting measures:

Contact parents immediately regarding any incident of bullying, harassment, and discrimination. Provide parents with a brochure or info on what to do or who to contact for help. 2) If an incident is reported and a child is found to be “guilty,” record it in a record that will follow them throughout their school life. This system will assist staff by notifying them if the child has problems continuously or periodically. It will allow other school systems to be aware of this child’s tendency, should they ever switch schools. It may be accessible to family

services, if needed. It will also pinpoint the time frame that the problem began. If that person grows up and needs that info for themselves to show or use in court, it will help them (i.e., molested child turned violent at the age they started bullying others). They need the time frames to work with. Keep good records. No incident is too small to record. 3) Hold parents accountable for their child's behaviour.

After three incidents, get Children and Family Services notified. The pattern must be broken early.

Other parents criticized policies and code of conduct:

Implement a policy against any type of bullying, have severe consequences for bullying, and actually consequence [*sic*] students for bullying. You can have the best plans in the world, but unless you actually implement them, they are just a waste of paper.

Some suggested that schools "have a code of conduct that everyone understands, explain this code to parents and students, adult role models who speak respectfully to children at all times."

One respondent recognized a need for different programming in the schools:

"Have the arts in school. Music drama. Not make everything a competition. Teach kids how to react in situations. Lions' quest for life skills." Another parent commented:

Offer more extracurricular activities during school break times and right after school so that students are not just 'hanging around' and talking at recess. These children need to be active and involved, which would lead to less idleness and more positive outcomes. Teachers to be better role models and more positive and energetic in their work so the children will act more positive. Also teachers to

enforce No tolerance. Less PD days and PD 1/2 days. Children need structure and consistency. Once again, when children are not stimulated, engaged, motivated, and kept busy doing positive projects, etc., they tend to be more likely to get in trouble. Teachers to help with self-confidence in children so regardless of what anyone may say to them, they are strong enough to know- it doesn't matter.

Some recommended that schools “continue the positive messages and explanations as well as student reflections, perhaps have an anonymous TIPS box for students to write about situations that are bothering them when no one is willing to listen.” One respondent suggested:

Provid(ing) ‘safe havens’ supervised ‘reading/relaxation’ areas during free time. For example, lunches/recess, provide options in gym class, e.g. instead of having to play volleyball for the week, the child could choose running/skipping/riding stationary bikes/using treadmills, activities that increase heart rate, yet don't ‘centre’ child out for being uncoordinated in sports. Provide extracurricular activities during lunches and recess to keep children's minds occupied, instead of bugging/teasing each other.

Some felt the addition of a component of a counselling program for children who are victimized was necessary, and a couple felt that school uniforms or a dress code would be a good solution.

Recommendations for Improvement

Recommendations for improvement are based on the findings of the Parent survey, and are aligned with the four pillars of the CIPB: education/awareness, assessment, intervention, and policy change (Pepler et al., 2005). The recommendations

of the parents are aligned with these pillars, with the exception of discipline. Parents suggested the need for “harsher” punishments, but the literature suggests that punitive punishments actually foster bullying behaviour. This perception identified a need for the schools to communicate with the parents about appropriate disciplinary actions in response to bullying.

Education/Awareness

Education. The education pillar “develops awareness to change attitudes and build commitment to address bullying problems among all...involved with children and youth” (Pepler et al., 2005). Education is an invaluable tool for the resolution of bullying behaviour. Parents perceived the need for education for students, teachers, and parents. It was a significant theme in their recommendations for improvement.

Education for students. Survey responses showed that children who bully pay particular attention to individual differences: race and culture, gender, disabilities, and academic performance. Parents recommended that more emphasis be given to educating children to respect and celebrate individual differences. One parent recognized this need, stating that education “develops a sense of community spirit and teaches that even though we’re different in size, shape, race, and age, we are all united in the (school name) community.”

Findings show electronic bullying to be prevalent and that girls were bullied the most in this way. Students need to learn how to use e-mail and text and instant messaging appropriately. With an emphasis on girls, the message must be conveyed that technology, despite its effectiveness and innovation as a communication tool, holds great potential for conflict with peers. Technological communication allows people to be less inhibited and

unaware of the distress of the victim (i.e., visually or audibly detected). Empathy for one another then becomes overlooked. In addition, there is the potential to misinterpret each other's words. Children must be educated about suitable ways to communicate electronically, and adults should supervise and monitor their use.

The survey responses indicated that children in the senior grades of elementary school (i.e., Grades 6 and 7) are more vulnerable to certain types of sexual harassment. It would be useful to expand on physiologic sexual education in the curriculum that encompass social issues around sexuality (i.e., sexual orientation, communication with the opposite sex, etc.). Many reports of sexual harassment identified name-calling about one's sexual orientation. Teaching about social issues pertaining to sexuality and educating students about diversity with respect to sexuality may decrease verbal bullying of this nature. In addition, social skill development (i.e., improved self-esteem and self-concept, conflict mediation skills, etc.) provides children with the confidence and resiliency to disregard the traumatic experience of bullying. It is essential that education be accomplished in a supportive and nurturing school climate.

Education for parents. Education about the nature of bullying and appropriate intervention strategies is imperative for parents because they have a unique role in influencing change. Children learn through imitation. Thus, the focus of parent education should model supportive, respectful, and inclusive relationships and the use of nonaggressive conflict mediation. Parents must be aware that communication with their children can be direct (e.g., positive words, encouragement, affection) as well as indirect (e.g., modeling through the home environment). Parents must be aware that a home

environment with minimal aggressive conflict, mutual respect, and support is internalized into the child's self-concept and encourages positive behaviour and conflict mediation.

With respect to punishment for bullying behaviour, parents, as well as teachers and all adult influences, must be educated about the ineffectiveness of punitive punishments. Many parents recommended harsher punishments as a means of facilitating bullying prevention. This response identified a common misconception about the efficacy of punitive punishments and presented a great opportunity for education. A comprehensive literature review on practical approaches to reduce the impact of bullying found that "aggressive, angry (harsh) punishments are likely to be ineffective and may even encourage further bullying" (Pearce & Thompson, 1998, p. 529). Adults in positions of authority (i.e., parents, teachers, principals) must be taught more effective and formative ways of dealing with children who bully. Pearce and Thompson suggested that "by far the most effective punishment (for bullying) is to insist that the bully make amends for the distress that has been caused" (p. 529). Several examples of formative punishments include a public apology, a private apology, a written apology, a gift or a special favour to the child who was bullied, or an offer of future protection to the child who was bullied. Parents must be educated that punitive punishments are ineffective and may foster bullying behaviour. Parents must be taught the efficacy of formative and proactive punishments and ways to implement them.

Parents may lack the personal resources to deal with the problem of bullying, or they may be unaware of the problem because of denial; heightened emotion (i.e., anger, frustration, anxiety); and a dismissive nature (Pepler, & Craig, 2000). Although teachers can actively support parents when bullying behaviour involves their children, Mishna

(2004) advocated for social workers to be another resource to help parents understand and respond to their children's perspectives and feelings regarding bullying, be cognizant of their own attitudes and views, and develop an awareness of the possibility that these differ from those of the children. Also, this relationship would allow the parents to realize that the children's distress may exceed their expectations. This will facilitate the parent taking action on each instance their children reports, whether the parents themselves find it to be a definitive bullying incident, and encourage the children to disclose each incidence.

Many of the parents reported not being aware of the rules related to student behaviour at their children's school, nor did they feel that the rules are enforced. Parents need to be more educated by school staff about the regulations pertaining to their children's behaviour.

Education for teachers. Teachers can influence children in the school environment because they possess a great deal of power in resolving bullying behaviour. They are the leaders and diplomats of their classrooms, and they have the capacity to have a positive influence on childhood dynamics. Teachers must be taught that their actions are imitated by children. Thus, in the same way as parents must model supportive relationships, teachers must teach by example in terms of respecting all persons and resolving conflict in respectful ways.

In addition to parents, teachers must also practice formative punishment (vs. harsher punishments). They must learn that more aggressive punishments (e.g., suspension, expulsion, zero tolerance) are likely to foster bullying behaviour. Education

about what constitutes a formative punishment and when to implement it is a very useful skill for teachers to have.

Parents and teachers are linked to the school climate, and they have the potential to dramatically influence children's participation in bullying behaviour, as well as their responses to these behaviour. Parents and teachers should exercise their opportunity to work together on this strategy, form a committee, implement plans, and forge new and innovative plans.

Awareness

Survey findings showed a strong discrepancy between the reported incidence of children being bullied and the reported incidence of children who bully. That is, parents report that their children are being bullied far more often than they report that their children are actively bullying. This could be interpreted in various ways: (a) Parents are unaware that their children bully others, (b) the children who bully do not tell their parents about their bullying behaviour, or (c) the children who bully have multiple targets. Regardless of the circumstance, there is a need for more parent-child communication and possibly more teacher-parent communication because bullying behaviour that is unrecognized as such remains unaddressed. It would be valuable to compare parent and student survey data to identify the frequency of unreported incidence of bullying. If bullying is not addressed, it is viewed as having tacit approval and support.

Parents perceive the most common areas for bullying as the outdoor areas around the school (i.e., schoolyard, playground) and when children are on their way to or home from school. Bullying behavior usually occurs when teachers and school staff are not

necessarily present or aware of the behaviour. Thus, parents need to be more conscious of such occasions, making their presence known via supervision.

Adults should also be aware of the diverse contexts of bullying (i.e., physical, verbal, social, and electronic) so that they can be more attentive to situations when it occurs and intervene appropriately. Very few parents are aware of or report electronic bullying, so they must monitor their children's use of the computer to engage in such behaviour. More supervision by teachers, parents, and volunteers, in conjunction with more education for students about healthy conflict mediation and social skill development, will make bullying behaviour far less damaging to children.

The survey was completed, for the most part, by the children's mothers. This situation suggests a need for more father or father figure involvement. It is important that fathers or father figures become more involved in bullying prevention programs for their children because paternal involvement is associated with a statistically significant decrease in the likelihood of children being bullied (Dake et al., 2003).

Assessment

The assessment pillar "provides universal assessment tools to evaluate the extent of bullying and/or victimization problems for children...their families, schools and communities" (Pepler et al., 2005).

Evaluation

With respect to the evaluation of the "Imagine..." framework tool and its efficacy, it may be useful to increase the breadth of the evaluation to include more schools. This may be advantageous to finding stronger significance in the data. The findings showed that many relationships between the variables had to be interpreted with

caution because such small subgroups of the population (e.g. ethnic minorities) were responding to certain questions. Another way to resolve this issue is to modify the questionnaire to ensure equal response rates among the questions (e.g. shorten the survey). Future researchers may find it beneficial to conduct semistructured interviews with students, teachers, and parents to obtain more information. Data from the parent survey will be the most meaningful when it is cross-referenced with the student and teacher surveys.

Survey Development

Though the survey is a validated and beneficial tool for analysis, several adaptations could make it more comprehensible. The 11-page length of the questionnaire may be intimidating to parents of lower literacy levels, or it may simply be a nuisance to parents who lead busy lives. It may be beneficial to amend the tool and make it more concise. In addition, making the survey more convenient to complete, as well as more time efficient with respect to data entry and analysis, could be accomplished by making the parent survey electronic, similar to the format of the student and teacher surveys. Not all parents have a computer or Internet access at home, so they could be given permission to complete this brief questionnaire online at the school. Response rates were fairly good for each school; however, to improve the response rates, the parents could be offered an incentive for completing the survey. Examples of incentives are a gift certificate or confirmation of rewards for their children's class (i.e., pizza party).

With respect to the content of the survey, the researcher suggests that several changes be made. The question asking parents to identify themselves by colour or race generated some sensitivity from parents. One parent responded that he/she is "a person,"

not a colour or a race; another said, “Actually, I don’t use White” as a self-descriptor. Another parent was sensitive to the fact that “you (the survey) ask parents’ race but not the child’s” as he explained that the parent race differs from that of the child, “so my answers will seem odd.” This finding has implications for the validity of the data because the children’s race, in the absence of a question identifying it, is assumed to be the same as their parents.

One parent perceived that the content of the survey is missing a key focus of bullying:

You are missing the key demographic of the bullied child, the vast majority of bullying reasons are not linked to race or sexual harassment. Sexual and racial bullying is the smallest percentage of the problems on the schoolyard. The majority of problems arise when children are teased about their appearance.

Whether the child is overweight, doesn’t wear the right clothes, doesn’t have the right hairdo, doesn’t fit in with a particular crowd, or just perceived as not that smart, the list goes on and on. Those are the children who are ostracized, left out, and wind up killing themselves because they have been taunted to the point where they just can’t take it anymore.

Perhaps more questions about physical appearance would remove some of the current emphasis on racial discrimination and sexual harassment and identify other causes of bullying. Another parent suggested that there was a “missing part” on the questionnaire, namely, harassment of children by their teachers. This parent said:

My daughter was for a time being harassed by her teacher. This teacher was one step away from bullying her. I can't even tell you the number of days my daughter used the stomachache excuse for not going to school because of her teacher.

Although this may be a sensitive issue to the parents, it may be worth including a question to identify incidents where teachers bully the children.

Intervention

The intervention pillar focuses on empirically based programs and tools to reduce bullying problems. The "Imagine..." framework addresses the need for intervention from all community members. The comprehensive, school-wide plan of the "Imagine..." framework expects involvement from school staff, parents, and students, and the construction of a positive school climate by all parties. The 10-step, systematic approach to bullying prevention is evidence based, and the sequential nature of the steps best accomplishes the goals of the tool.

The "Imagine..." plan is innovative in that it includes important avenues for communication among parents, students, and school staff (e.g., Step 2: Establish a School Climate Committee). This commitment to communication should, in time, rectify the high proportion of parents (14%) "never" reporting incidents of bullying so that bullying occurrences are not dealt with. In addition, the plan has integrated continuous monitoring initiatives (e.g., Step 5: Create and Amend a School Statement for Respectful School Environment and Step 10: Monitor and Reassess the School Plan) to ensure an evidence base to the intervention. The "Imagine..." framework tool recognizes that building a comprehensive plan and establishing the goals of the plan take time. It is useful for all parties involved in the "Imagine..." intervention to remember that a

successful initiative is one that is long term, so they must resist feeling discouraged from a lack of tangible short-term successes, and adhere to the program.

Policy

The policy pillar, in collaboration with organizations and governments, focuses on developing policies that speak to the concerns about bullying by children, as well as all Canadian citizens. One parent recognized the need for policies by saying, “You can have the best plans in the world, but unless you actually implement them, they are just a waste of paper.” It is imperative that bullying prevention and intervention strategies be implemented.

Conclusion

Totten et al. (2004a) recognized bullying as “an undeclared public health problem in Canadian schools. Bullying, sexual harassment, racial discrimination, and victimization are so prevalent that we cannot possibly reach all affected students with traditional intervention approaches” (Totten et al., p. 38). They proposed making strides in public health policy to improve antibullying and harassment programs. They commented that “taking a public health approach to peer relationship problems will build the capacity of parents, schools and communities” (p. 6). The development of long-term, whole-school community programs will best address the key determinants of healthy youth development. In keeping with the social ecological model (Totten & Quigley, 2003) of bullying, health promotion and behaviour changes are best accomplished when they flow from a societal infrastructure, thus permeating daily routines and the way the public thinks about healthy living.

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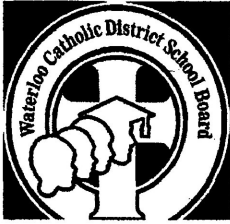
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APPENDIX A

Cover Letter Template for Parent Survey



(school address)

(date)

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Region of Waterloo Public Health is working with our school to prevent and deal with bullying. As part of this process, students and parents/guardians in our school are asked to fill out surveys during April 2005. Our school is strongly committed to making sure students have a safe and healthy place to learn and we ask you to consider allowing your child to participate. It is an exciting chance for us to make our school a better place and parents/guardians have an important role to play.

We are asking students to fill out the surveys so that we can learn more about bullying in our school. Students will fill out the survey using a computer. The survey will take about 60 minutes during classroom time. Teachers will be in charge of giving the survey to their class. The decision about whether or not your child fills out the survey is yours. To help you with this decision, a brief description of the survey is provided.

Students will be asked about their experiences with physical, verbal, social and electronic bullying. Students will also be asked where and when they think bullying happens most and their reaction to seeing other students being bullied. The survey also asks the students what they do if they are bullied, their beliefs about bullying and their sense of connectedness to our school.

The information from the surveys will be used to help our school plan and respond to bullying as well as to measure the effectiveness of our bullying prevention efforts. Your child's participation in this survey is voluntary. Parents/guardians and children may withdraw their permission at any time before or during the survey. Your child's schooling will not be influenced in any way whether or not you choose to let your child participate.

Your child's name will NOT appear on the survey. All surveys are private and confidential. Individual children's survey results will not be shared with school staff.

However, information based on the combined results of students in each grade who take part in the survey will be provided to school staff. All information collected from the surveys will be stored either electronically in a password-secured file or in a locked filing cabinet at Region of Waterloo Public Health.

Your child may not benefit personally from filling out the survey. However, I believe our school as a whole will benefit from learning more about bullying from our students. There are no known or anticipated risks to your child in filling out the survey.

Summary results from the surveys can be obtained after (date) by contacting (Manager) from Public Health at xxx-xxxx, extension xxxx. The summary results will be presented by grade level, combining the findings from our school with the other schools participating in the evaluation: Sir Edgar Bauer (Waterloo), St. Brigid (Ayr), St. Nicholas (Waterloo) and St. Margaret of Scotland (Cambridge).

We would like to assure you that the survey has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Region of Waterloo Public Health Ethics Committee and has been approved by the Waterloo Catholic District School Board. If you have any questions or concerns about your child filling out the survey, please contact xxxxx from Public Health at xxx-xxxx, extension xxxx.

If you do **NOT** want your child to complete the survey, please contact xxxxx from Public Health at xxx-xxxx, extension xxxx by **(date)**. If you do not indicate otherwise, we will assume that you are giving your permission for your child to fill out the survey.

At the time your child's class fills out the survey, your child will be given the option of not filling out the survey. Whether or not your child decides to fill out the survey will not affect their schooling in any way. Children who decide not to fill out the survey will be asked to read from their silent reading books while the rest of their class is filling out the survey.

The parent/guardian survey will be sent home with your child during mid (month) for you to complete. The class which has the greatest percentage of returned and completed parent/guardian surveys will win a pizza party. We strongly encourage you to complete the parent/guardian survey and to permit your child to participate in making our school a safe and healthy place to learn.

Sincerely,

(Principal Name)
(School Name)

(Superintendent Name)
Waterloo Catholic District School Board

xxx, Manager,
Youth Health Program
Region of Waterloo Public Health

APPENDIX B
Descriptive Tables

Table B1

Parents' Perceptions of Children's Sense of Safety

	Never True	Not Really True	Somewhat True	Often True	Always True	No response
At school	--	1%	7%	37%	53%	2%
To and from school		1%	8%	37%	50%	2%
In neighbourhood and community	--	1.5%	6%	42%	48%	1%

Table B2

Focus of Parents' Concerns for Bullying Behaviour Toward Their Children

	Never True	Not Really True	Somewhat True	Often True	Always True	No Response
Physical	34%	31%	21%	9%	4%	1%
Sexual	63%	28%	5%	3%	1%	1%
Teasing/exclusion because of race	64%	25%	6%	3%	2%	1%
Teasing/exclusion because of sexual orientation	73%	22%	3%	1%	1%	1%
Rumours and gossiping	34%	27%	24%	9%	5%	1%
Verbal harassment and embarrassment	28%	25%	28%	13%	6%	1%

Table B3

Incidence of Children Being Bullied

	Never in 4 Weeks	Once/Twice a Month	Every Week	Many Times a Week	Don't Know	No Response
Physically	77%	15%	2%	1%	6%	1%
Verbally	32%	23%	5%	3%	8%	2%
Socially	56%	28%	3%	4%	8%	2%
Electronically	87%	5%	--	--	7%	1%

Table B4

Incidence of Children Being Racially Discriminated Against

	Never in 4 Weeks	Once/ Twice a Month	Don't Know	No Response
Negative things said about race	91%	3%	5%	1%
Name-calling	92%	1%	5%	2%
Teased	93%	2%	4%	1%
Treated as inferior	92%	1%	4%	2%
Race blamed for problems in school or society	94%	1%	3%	1%

Table B5

Incidence of Sexual Harassment

	Never in 4 Weeks	Once/ Twice a Month	Don't Know	No Response
Told didn't look/act feminine/ masculine enough	85%	7%	7%	2%
Name calling	75%	13%	6%	3%
Rumour spreading, note passing, graffiti	89%	3%	6%	2%
Crude comments	85%	5%	7%	2%
Yelled/whistled/ howled at	88%	3%	6%	2%
Sexual motions made/looked at in sexual way	88%	2%	7%	2%
Grabbed/pinched/ touched in sexual way	92%	1%	5%	2%
Rubbing in a sexual way	91%	1%	5%	2%
Kissed him/her when he/she did not want the kiss	92%	--	5%	2%
Forced to perform sexual acts	93%	--	5%	2%

Table B6

Focus of Bullying Behaviour

	Never in 4 Weeks	Once/Twice a Month	Every Week	Many Times a Week	Don't Know	No Response
Religion	96%	--	--	--	3%	1%
Skin colour	94%	1%	--	--	3%	2%
Country of origin	95%	1%	--	--	3%	1%
Physical disability	95%	1%	1%	--	3%	1%
Mental disability	95%	1%	--	--	3%	1%
Other disability (e.g. learning)	90%	4%	1%	1%	3%	1%
Academic performance (i.e., grades)	80%	12%	2%	--	5%	1%
Gender	89%	4%	1%	1%	4%	2%
Academic difficulty	87%	5%	1%	1%	4%	2%
Weight	84%	8%	2%	2%	3%	2%
Physical appearance, height, body shape	79%	10%	3%	1%	4%	2%
Dress/clothing style	83%	9%	--	1%	5%	3%
Financial status	92%	1%	--	--	4%	2%
Physical weakness	87%	5%	1%	1%	5%	1%

Table B7

Incidence of Children Bullying Others

	Never in 4 Weeks	Once/Twice a Month	Don't Know	No Response
Physically	86%	5%	7%	1%
Verbally	80%	9%	8%	2%
Socially	77%	10%	11%	1%
Electronically	93%	1%	5%	1%

Table B8

Incidence of Children Racially Discriminating Against Peers

	Never in 4 Weeks	Once or Twice	Don't Know	No Response
Negative things said about race	93%	1%	5%	1%
Name-calling	93%	--	4%	3%
Teasing	94%	--	4%	1%
Treating as inferior	94%	--	4%	1%
Blaming race for problems in school/society	94%	1%	4%	1%

Table B9

Where Children Bully/are Bullied

	Not at All True	Not Really True	Sometimes True	Often True	Always True	Does Not Apply	No Response*
Classroom	42%	12%	11%	4%	3%	25%	3%
Hallways	41%	13%	12%	4%	2%	24%	5%
Library	50%	15%	4%	1%	1%	25%	4%
Computer room	50%	14%	4%	1%	1%	27	3
Gym	44%	15%	9%	3%	2%	25%	3%
Change room	46%	13%	7%	3%	2%	27%	4%
Washrooms	46%	13%	9%	2%	1%	26%	4%
Bus/train	39%	8%	7%	3%	3%	37%	3%
Coat room	42%	10%	4%	1%	1%	38%	4%
To/from school	39%	14%	10%	5%	3%	26%	3%
Lunch area	42%	14%	8%	4%	1%	26%	5%
Outdoor area	26%	10%	18%	10%	10%	22%	3%
Malls/stores	48%	11%	2%	1%	1%	33%	4%
Other*	38%	7%	1%	1%	1%	37%	15%

* 94% of those who responded that bullying took place in "other" areas did not indicate where.

Table B10

When are Children Bullied?

	Not at All True	Not Really True	Sometimes True	Often True	Always True	No Response
Before school	64%	16%	11%	5%	1%	4%
During classes	60%	18%	10%	6%	3%	4%
Between classes	58%	18%	11%	5%	2%	5%
During breaks (e.g. recess, lunch, spare period)	37%	14%	21%	14%	12%	3%
After school	56%	15%	15%	7%	4%	4%
On weekends	71%	17%	7%	1%	1%	3%

APPENDIX C

Verbatim Sampling of Parents' Recommendations by Theme

a) CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM (278)***More Supervision (32)***

- “More teachers to supervise at recess & lunch hour, teach tolerance and that although we are all different we are all special”
- “More teacher supervision during recess/lunch, emphasize tolerance and acceptance of differences between everyone. We are all equal.”
- “More teacher involvement when dealing with bullying”
- “More yard supervisors, patrol school better, too many students from other schools go to playground during school, teachers need to be more involved not EA's and child and youth workers who hardly know the children,- they can not see changes in kids behaviour efficiently they do not see them enough, cut back them and put salary towards security measures”
- “Have a special class/workshop where the bullies can stay and learn. 2. Have more teachers on duty”
- “Have more adult supervision during recess, teach more life skills- determination, assertiveness, how to deal with aggression, stress, have discussion groups in each class to discuss current problems, concerns, and also one-on-one with teacher/student, make parents aware of the above student problems and concerns”
- “This is sad that such strategies have to be taught at a Christian Catholic school. Our society is to blame. Where are the parents of these bullies? I don't think the school does everything they can. I understand how they want to empower a victim, but sometimes there isn't enough adult supervision. Maybe early identification of the bullies (more adult supervision on the playground) There should be a course on the profile of a bully. All this just sickens me!”
- “Continue with sessions on the topic of bullying, believe in the children who express any concerns of they're being bullied, more staff on the playground (more eyes and ears), deal with behaviour immediately, I find it horrible that such behaviour happens in a Christian Catholic environment. Bullying is just wrong. I am sickened that

"sessions" need to take place to educate the children. We are living in a very sick society!"

- "We can work together as a unit to keep the school safe. Put more teachers out at recess times and give each teacher an area of the school yard to patrol"
- "More supervision on playgrounds "black top" at recess or lunchtime"
- "Increase outdoor supervision"
- "Just keep an eye and ear out on playgrounds etc for unkind words or acts"
- "Firstly, I believe that some of the school's policies, such as detentions, study halls, suspensions and the like, are not an effective deterrent. In a bullying situation, clear and immediate communication between the school and the parents of the bully is essential. The school needs to impress upon the parents that they may be held legally responsible for their children's actions. If the parents' actions (which need to be communicated to the school immediately) are not effective, the matter may indeed need to be taken up involving police. The school also needs to remember the staff, principal and board can be held personally/severely/jointly responsible for actions against victims of bullying. Perhaps at the very least, more staff/volunteers should be patrolling schoolyards and hallways. Police constables may be effective in speaking to schools, making sure students understand that harsh measures may need to be taken. Clearly, the measures currently in place not effective whatsoever (in at least some cases) and much harsher punishments need serious and immediate consideration."

"My thoughts on bullying are that we should have been better monitoring on the school buses and the children that are bus patrols should have to go through a class of dealing with bus situations (i.e. bad children, etc) Bus patrols seem to care little to none about the safety and welfare of the children (speaking for our bus- yellow bus)"

"Teachers on duty during recess and lunch should be more aware of the social behaviours and cliques that occur"

- "Continue to inform parents and students about what to do when this happens. Monitor yard behaviour closely"
- "Educating children more on these topics, better surveillance outside during recess and lunch"

- “More fair treatment, i.e. if 2 kids are caught fighting, they both should be suspended
2) Stop listening to lame excuses, i.e. my son was punched in the eye supposedly because the other kids was waving his arms in the air in anger and my son happened to be in the way 3) More teachers on yard duty during recess and lunch periods because that is when most incidents happen 4) Security cameras inside and outside the school 5) Stronger security features for computers i.e. kids can go into other kids files and either steal or delete work, i.e. teachers should have all the passwords on a sheet of paper and each password should be different”
- “Be proactive while on yard supervision, students often use look outs to disperse others when a teacher approaches, praise model students, enlist their assistance regarding conflict resolution, assist younger students to learn ways to speak out if overwhelmed by older students, continue the positive messages and explanations as well as student reflections, perhaps have an anonymous TIPS box for students to write about situations that are bothering them when no one is willing to listen. Because that does happen- teachers are overworked and problems slip by”
- “Drastically increase the adult/student ratio at lunch and recess- I've been out at recess and have seen first hand, how students get away with treating each other”
- “More teachers outside during breaks”
- “More supervision during breaks - on school yard”
- “Better supervision at lunch and recess. I find that reaction to bullying is dependant on the teacher. This year the teacher has zero tolerance. As soon as it is reported to her she takes measures to correct it. i.e. open class discussion and role-playing. Excellent!! Last year my son's teacher basically had the attitude that although bullying is unfortunate it is not surprising because we had to accept that our son is "different" and will always be a target. Basically, she felt that my son should just get used to it. Not an acceptable attitude as far as I am concerned”
- “Assemblies to talk about how even if we are different we are all the same. Talk about how bullying hurts not only the person being bullied but everyone. More teacher supervisions at recess. Giving the kids a chance to talk to their class teacher about what happens at recess etc. Promoting a safe environment. Rewarding students for not bullying. Buddy system- older grades looking out for younger grades, etc.”

- “Increased school yard supervision, add more supervisors, clear consequences, increased exposure of principal in halls/schoolyard”
- “Education, supervision”
- “Have more supervision at lunch hours, before and after school. I have heard too many incidents where boys are being hurt, fighting isn't being stopped and injuries are happening when games get too rough. Enforce your rules.”
- “Keep a closer eye on students in the playgrounds, listen to both sides of the story, in one case our son was accused of bullying and the school over reacted, now I wonder if he has been labeled and will get the same treatment”
- “More in yard patrol”
- “Monitor the washrooms at school, more serious consequence for bullying, detention, in-school suspension, out of school suspension”
- “My daughter has reported there is a fair amount of abusive language, swearing and aggressiveness in the school yard during recess. She says when a teacher is nearby, students tend to behave themselves. However, most of the time, teachers are not readily present, according to her. Perhaps there could be less bullying if there was better supervision”

EDUCATION

Children (35)

- “Parents at home need to teach their children that bullying and sexual harassment is not a very nice thing to do to others. I believe that children see and do; a lot of it comes from home and other people around them. If we all force something good our children will follow. Thxs, [parent's name]”
 “More teacher supervision during recess/lunch, emphasize tolerance and acceptance of differences between everyone. We are all equal”
- “Educate the children on the dangers of these actions. Refer to all the events of recent days reported on T.V. where children who have been bullied or harassed are lashing out. Unfortunately with terrible results. Punish the people involved and make them understand how wrong and hurtful their actions are”
- “Develop self confidence and have ability to socially confront negative situations”

- “Make the student aware of bullying, 2. Educate the children how to deal with bullies, 3. Parents should also be involved in enforcing school rules on their children”
- “Have a special class/workshop where the bullies can stay and learn. 2. Have more teachers on duty”
- “My child’s school can talk more about bullying and sexual harassment at school to warn children of the consequences”
- “Continue to encourage/teach/model/establish a culture of: each and every person to learn and continue learning to love themselves and to always honour themselves, especially by being/doing the very best they can”
- “Continue presentations to students that this behaviour is not acceptable”
- “Name it --> address it --> punish offenders --> educate student (bully) and family”
- “Make sure that everyone feels welcome and respected, even if the child has difficulties and challenges, every teacher should strive to kids feel happy at school and support those with difficulties, all students should be taught to respect, accept everyone”
- “Zero tolerance. Educate kids on the importance/effects of the above mentioned. Kids are empathetic I think when seeing or hearing first hand about how the above treatments can affect individuals. Perhaps sometimes the kids who are discriminating or harassing (more so than bullying) don't realize how harmful what they're doing, really is. This is where education on the subject is so important. Knowledge is power. If kids have the knowledge, they have the power to stop it”
- “Discussing the problem on a more regular basis with the students”
- “I think the key is education, but the education can't just stop at the students. I think parents need education too on how to help our children deal with the situations they experience at school. The school environment has changed very drastically since we were in school and what we may have done- definitely might not be the best solution. If we are expecting our schools to solve the bullying situations at school- what do we do to help and talk about it at home. For example, a child says a student at school is bossing them around. We tell our child to talk to the teacher. The teacher tells the student it is only a little problem and the students need to solve it on their

own. This problem evolves to a big problem with no resolution. As parents, what can we do to support our children with real solutions to the situations they experience at school. Maybe develop parent focus groups with children to develop examples and solutions to share with other parents and children”

- “Continue to teach about respect, individual differences, self esteem, peer pressure and group mentality, have conflict mediation and bring all parts of the triangle together to end the cycle. Consequences known for any harassment - suspension or expulsion”
- “Continue to educate the students on what bullying is, as well as why it happens. It is also important to teach that we have to be part of the solution. Overall, I hear a lot of talk from my children on talks that they had in school regarding the topic. The message that it is unacceptable is clear and well delivered, to date”
- “Teach children exactly what is considered to be bullying, i.e. more than once, on purpose, teach what tattling is, teach steps in how to deal with bullying i.e., 1. Ask other child to stop, 2. Tell how it feels, 3. If unsuccessful, tell adult, do not retaliate, 4. If they see bullying, tell adults (do not tattle). Children need to know if it is bullying, otherwise don't tattle”
- “Continue to educate the students about these issues, feelings of others and to enforce consequences for negative behaviours (verbal and/or physical)”
- “Continue to inform parents and students about what to do when this happens. Monitor yard behaviour closely”
- “Educating children more on these topics, better surveillance outside during recess and lunch”
- “Any bullying at school should be disciplined at school, and then dealt with at home. Kids should be made responsible for their actions. I don't know if they are. They should be taught as well to respect each other and or their elders”
- “I believe Sir Edgar Bauer does a good job of trying to prevent these things from happening. Educating the students, enforcing a "no tolerance" policy and having consequences for inappropriate actions”
- “I would like some more public teaching of these areas for student and parents”

- “Continue to be vigilant in teaching children respect and tolerance. Continue to provide discussions and assemblies, continue to enforce the zero tolerance policies, deal definitively with any and all incidents of bullying, harassment and discrimination”
- “Educate, communicate and educate some more”
- “Talk to the students from JK upwards about bullying, harassment and discrimination. Tell them what will happen if they take part in any of the above situations”
- “Educate children about different cultures and teach them to be tolerant, to discourage discrimination, make it very clear what the consequences of bullying will be, If any immediate bullying takes place, take action immediately instead of ignoring it”
- “Education and parents participation in it will be and it is the only solution to all these problems”
- “Give children more knowledge about the effects on how bullying can damage other children and their families. Have more clear discussions and group assemblies of all ages. Younger children should be taught at an earlier age pre school or junior kindergarten about bullying and with that knowledge taught at a younger age may prevent bullying as they get older. I also think young girls are more apt to bullying other girls and a girls behaviour or bullying class would be something a great asset to any girl and would be nice if it were offered to young girls at their school”
- “To continue to take these issues very seriously, to in-service all staff on recognizing these issues as they manifest themselves at different age levels and on how to deal with events in an effective manner, to teach students about the seriousness of these issues with a strong emphasis on the roll of the bystander and empowering the victim”

Parental Education (17)

- “To prevent bullying it is not up to the school solely it begins at home, you need to educate parents. Bullying is a sign of other problems if parents would react to their children’s outbursts bullying would not be. Make parents be parents”

- “Pay more attention to complaints and stop telling the kids to handle it on their own. Making the child feel as if it's his/her adult”
- “In most cases it all starts with the parents or guardians- Educate the adults...they are the ones who need it most!”
- “School wide educational seminars that label bullying, harassment and discrimination and set behavioural standards”
- “Continue to inform parents and students about what to do when this happens. Monitor yard behaviour closely”
- “Immediate parental involvement and zero tolerance”
- “I think the school should continue to set up and follow the "zero tolerance" policy on bullying, harassment and discrimination. 1) be consistent and fair 2) enforce strict consequences for any students that disobeys the rules 3) continue to have school wide assemblies on the topic of bullying and teach strategies to students who are the victims of bullying 4) reinforce the "zero tolerance" policy in school newsletters 5) work with parents of students who are the bullies and provide them with the names of agencies or groups who can help his/her daughter with their bullying”
- “I would like some more public teaching of these areas for student and parents”
- “I answered this survey based on my son's criteria because his age/grade etc was being surveyed. However, I feel that social bullying begins much earlier with girls and my daughter has experienced social bullying in grades one and two as well as three. I would like class discussions, workshops etc to start as early as grade one for students. Also, my son was labeled a bully by a parent in 2004. This parent was not willing to look at their child's role in this situation which made things distressful for all involved. I would like to see a seminar for parents held two or three times per year for education and information regarding bullying. Had this parent had some education about bullying (as I do) our situation would have been handled with a lot less stress and more discussion”
- “Education and parents participation is the only way to prevent all these issues”
- “Education and parents participation in it will be and it is the only solution to all these problems”

Teacher Education (16)

- “Pay more attention to complaints and stop telling the kids to handle it on their own. Making the child feel as if it's his/her adult”
- “Educate, be cautious not to validate rumours only act on valid bullying, sometimes any attention at certain ages is wanted therefore validating rumours can be dangerous”
- “Boys will be boys at times in sports and in games, at times they will challenge each other in fighting and stuff, and I find teachers bully verbally at times, they seems to be the biggest offenders of this. Thanks for this”
- “Watch teachers- some of them make negative comments to the children. Happened to my son last week- the teacher made some comment that my son "probably didn't study for his test." This after I had asked for extra work to help him at home. My son studied and did well, no positive comment from the teacher”
- “Rather than put so much emphasis on "not bullying" (which to me is the symptom), put more emphasis on the cause - self-respect, respect for others, basically loving themselves which will allow them to love each other. Children hurt others b because they feel hurt themselves. 2) Train teachers more on dealing with behaviour issues. I am shocked at some of the comments. Teachers need to remain professional, respectful and stop yelling”
- “Pay more attention to the children - Listen 2) Talk to the children affected, to really find out what is bothering her/him and listen 3) Enforce stricter penalties for known bullies who carry on bullying others 4) Be constantly on the look out for bullying and signs of it in affected children 5) More workshops for teachers, more training in psychological impact 6) Workshops for children in how to deal with difficult situations effectively”
- “I am impressed at how quickly our school responds to bullying. I have heard of, through my daughter, of situations that have happened at her school and how quick the school is to justify the problem. They never over re-act but yet they don't ignore the problem. I was bullied as a child in grade school and nothing was ever done to help me. Teachers looked the other way, literally. I'm so pleased to see the school's

taking charge of this problem and I am always talking to my daughter about it and how it hurts kids. Thanks for being involved!”

- “Offer more extra curricular activities during school break times and right after school so that students are not just "hanging around" and talking at recess. These children need to be active and involved which would lead to less idleness and more positive outcomes. Teachers to be better role models and more positive and energetic in their work so the children will act more positive. Also teachers to enforce No tolerance. Less PD days and PD 1/2 days. Children need structure and consistency. Once again, when children are not stimulated, engaged, motivated and kept busy doing positive projects, etc, they tend to be more likely to get in trouble. Teachers to help with self confidence in children so regardless of what anyone may say to them, they are strong enough to know- it doesn't matter”
- “Education and parents participation in it will be and it is the only solution to all these problems”
- “To continue to take these issues very seriously, to in-service all staff on recognizing these issues as they manifest themselves at different age levels and on how to deal with events in an effective manner, to teach students about the seriousness of these issues with a strong emphasis on the roll of the bystander and empowering the victim”

Harsher Punishments (52)

- “I think there needs to be honest discussions between parents, kids and school regarding consequences of bullying. Feelings need to be discussed. Kids really need to know that a person's self worth is being eroded each time they are being made fun of.”
- “The school can have a 'No-Tolerance' policy where if anyone caught or reported to be bullying should be suspended for a few days from school so that they realize that this behavior will not be tolerated at any costs”
 “Treat everybody the same and if the students don't treat each other the same the students who bully should have to make different rules for the children who don't obey/or follow the rules [date]”

- “If a child goes out of his way to hurt a child by physical or mentally, he or she should be suspended for a month to get the message out that a school is to learn not to hurt a child by cruel means”
- “Enforce what they preach and not only enforce the rules. The teachers and principle should watch & deal with the bullies and not be afraid to discipline them”
- “I think the act of bullying should be condemned by all schools. Children caught in the act of bullying need help and such students should be given professional help before they graduate to hardened criminals. Their victims should be counseled and assisted in regaining their self esteem”
- “I believe there should be more disciplinary actions taken regarding this issue. A great majority of the problems my child is facing is coming from the same child we have had problems with in the past (years). Talking to & blue slips are not always a cure for the problem. I believe some students would benefit with counseling done in school to correct this behaviour. In school counseling is more important for all since many parents are a direct cause of bullying issues”
- “Maybe they need to talk about it on a regular basis. A constant reminder to children is needed all the time about everything and anything, so talking about bullying etc. on a regular basis and also the punishment/consequence if it did happen”
- “Act on the zero tolerance rule so the kids will understand that bullying with never be tolerated, and that if a child is bullied they know if they report it will be dealt with”
- “Greater, severe consequences for the children that do it!”
- “Continue to provide strong guidelines to prevention and to take steps to enforce the rules with respect to the offenders”
- “Be consistent in dealing with the offenders, if it has been happened repeatedly. There should be no reason stronger steps shouldn't be taken”
- “Follow rules consistently, don't ignore some behaviours one time and deal with them at other times”
- “Expel the children from school. There is definitely a bullying problem at St. Brigid that the children just stay away from areas of the school so they do not get bullied. The grade 5 and 6 classes push and bully children often”

- “Zero tolerance. Educate kids on the importance/effects of the above mentioned. Kids are empathetic I think when seeing or hearing first hand about how the above treatments can affect individuals. Perhaps sometimes the kids who are discriminating or harassing (more so than bullying) don't realize how harmful what they're doing, really is. This is where education on the subject is so important. Knowledge is power. If kids have the knowledge, they have the power to stop it”
- “Enforce suspension after no more than three warnings”
- “Keep on doing what they are doing. No tolerance!”
- “More consistency in the yard dealing with verbal abuse, exclusion, homophobia. Classroom meetings, so kids have a safe place to raise concerns. Stiffer consequences for kids who repeatedly engage in bullying behaviour. No just study halls. More involvement of by-standers. They should be held accountable if they witness bullying and do nothing about it”
- “Rules- teach or make children know rules and consequences, enforce rules, zero tolerance, children should know to share if they are feeling bullied in any way (not to be afraid)”
- “I think it's going well at the school. The one incident that was a quip from a male classmate- directed at my daughter- that made her feel "small." The incident was dealt with by the teacher. We talked about the issue at home as well. 1) Contact parents immediately regarding any incident of bullying, harassment and discrimination. Provide parents with a brochure or info on what to do or who to contact for help. 2) If an incident is reported and a child is found to be "guilty," record it in a record that will follow them throughout their school life. This system will assist staff by notifying them if the child has problems continuously or periodically. It will allow other school systems to be aware of this child's tendency should they ever switch schools. It may be accessible to family services if needed. It will also pin point the time frame that the problem began. If that person grows up and needs that info for themselves to show or use in court, it will help them. i.e. molested child turned violent at the age they started bullying others. They need the time frames to work with. Keep good records. No incident is too small to record. 3) Hold parents accountable for their child's behaviour. After three incidents get

Children and Family Services notified. The pattern must be broken early. 4) If repeat incidents involve a bus, revoke the privileges for 2 weeks. If it still continues, double it to 4 weeks. One more time they're off the bus. 5) Record detentions on the report cards so parents are aware of what goes on. 6) Host an in school "Multi Cultural Festival." Kids can bring traditional foods, flags and do little speeches about their own heritage in class. They can do little posters that can be put up in the halls. Have an assembly featuring traditional dancers, food, and traditional games and songs. The possibilities are endless and fun! Younger kids need to see the older kids participating. It develops a sense of community spirit and teaches that even though we're different in size, shape, race and ages, we are all united in the St. Nicholas school community”

- “Continue to educate the students about these issues, feelings of others and to enforce consequences for negative behaviours (verbal and/or physical)”
- “I believe that there need to be real consequences for actions that are obviously against the rules. Study hall is not considered a punishment to these kids; they think it is quite funny. There is far too much out of control behaviour in some classrooms, and the teachers aren't able to deal with it. This is in now ay the fault of the teachers. These children have no respect for authority. Again, there are no significant consequences, so the behaviour carries on. To know that a child talks back to a teacher when told to do something, and the child shows complete defiance, is very worrying to me as a parent. This lack of respect is carried out to the playground and then things start to happen to the kids. I'm very worried about what I am seeing and hearing at our school, and I really believe that some control needs to be returned to the adults. What is the solution? I don't have that answer, but this is a great step. Something else that is concerning me is the very competitive nature of our entire school (seemingly). I wish that everything wasn't a competition (i.e., colour house points, most cans of food brought in, etc.). This translates into competition, on the playground, and results in some very hurtful statements being made about one child being better than another based on either athletic ability or academic prowess. I wish this could be addressed as well, because I think it can be related to bullying as well”

- “Implement a policy against any type of bullying, have severe consequences for bullying and actually consequence students for bullying. You can have the best plans in the world but unless you actually implement them, they are just a waste of paper. Strict penalties against bullying would deter a lot of bullies. Maybe if their parents were informed every time there was an incident, and the student who was doing the bullying consequences every time, maybe the problems would stop”
- “I feel that a better job of the zero tolerance rules that was set out by the school at the beginning of the school year should be better enforced than some of the examples that our children have brought to our attention. P.S. Bullying and harassment isn't always done by fellow students!”
- “Be consistent in recognizing it and punishments”
- “Enforce more consistently their "zero" tolerance for violence and harassment. Seems to be a fair bit of bullying from other students parents- this should be addressed”
- “The school can ensure there are consequences for every act of bullying, harassment and discrimination. Effect a zero tolerance policy”
- “The only option would be to suspend the offending student from attending school”
- “I think the following things could help to prevent or reduce bullying, harassment and discrimination: monthly assemblies/discussions about bullying, clear rules and consistent consequences, effective communication with parents regarding rules and code of conduct for the school, dress code, weekly class meetings to address these issues (children would feel more comfortable discussing these issues in a smaller group setting than whole school assembly), target children who are constantly disobeying rules and have them participate in small group programs to deal with their issues, big brothers/big sisters program”
- “Immediate parental involvement and zero tolerance”
- “Awareness, zero tolerance”
- “Consistency and enforcement of rules to all students, more supervision/adult presence in the school yard on recess and lunch breaks”

- “Enforce rules so that bullies know the consequences and follow through, make consequences harsh b/c the "bully" should have to be made aware of the seriousness of their behaviour on the students they are bothering”
- “Continue to make rules and guidelines obvious. Enforce these rules and guidelines consistently with all students. Possibly develop a teaching plan for parents and caregivers so all involved are aware of what constitutes bullying and harassment, etc. Perhaps repeat "offenders" should have to take part in a workshop with parents i.e. parents would have to also participate and learn. I can also see small trend with some children to turn any hurt feeling into a "bullying incident" I believe this is equally wrong. Hopefully we can come to a balanced position in the months and years to come”
- “The zero tolerance policy is the best thing. Enforcing it might be difficult but the school does a great job”
- “Let the bullies know that the school will not stand for it and that they will get found out. They will be heavy punishments for bullies”
- “I feel they should put the person discriminating in the same situation so they can see how it feels”

Building Awareness (20)

- “Having lots of school assemblies, putting up posters around the school. That stuff would be very helpful and if they were also a lot more strict about it”
- “Workshops- bullying, self-esteem, good role models at school - teachers lead by example, principal lead by example, students able to talk & feel comfortable talking to principal about issues and problems they may face, I would like to see a guidance counselor for kids to talk to if they encounter problems/issues”
- “Get parents involved and have more social events where parents and children take an active roll in getting to know the school community! Small communities do a better job of protecting their children (smaller schools) thus more accountability!”
- “Keep up with school assembly to talk as a whole -guest speakers (police?)”
- “Just continue the classroom discussions, the workshops and professionals coming in to the school and talking to the children, showing videos, answering questions, etc.

Continuing all of that and by continuing to take action of the person doing the bullying”

- “School to provide more awareness through class and the same will be very useful for parents”
- “Encourage children to be open about this issue and always take every step to prevent”
- “I think teachers and parents should keep talking to their children more and more every day that we are all equal. Try to get more programs and activities to help children socialize more”
- “Continue to be vigilant in teaching children respect and tolerance. Continue to provide discussions and assemblies, continue to enforce the zero tolerance policies, deal definitively with any and all incidents of bullying, harassment and discrimination”

Communication (51)

- “Always listen when a child comes forward to share information. If the child feels brave enough to discuss it, it must be given time to investigate the claim”
- “Implement school uniforms, stop allowing game boys to school!, more activities (physical and group) during the lunch hour for community participation and children to work as a team player, more staff should be out on the yard during breaks for safety, more classroom discussions and offer incentives, we need to somehow get control of the violence from movies and video games. Implement programs at the different schools in the evening once a month or every other month that allows children and parents to attend together”
- “Take small groups and have informal conversations throughout the year and mix it up. Put boys and girls together and just boy/just girls and ask them questions and do not beat around the bush ask the direct questions at a level they will understand and they will be able to comment on and if someone answers the wrong way take them aside and offer them help and follow up on it”
- “The school can be more consistent with their enforcing of the rules regarding harassment, bullying and discrimination; teachers/volunteers need to be more visible

both inside and outside of the school. i.e. recess, lunch breaks. Encourage children (especially the younger grades) not to be afraid and to tell an adult about these issues. Teachers at this school could be a little more approachable”

- “Somehow address bullying/harassment that occur on the way home from school. Encourage/help the student form buddy groups to walk home. Openly discuss incidents of bullying/harassment that occur on the way home. Kids at this school all know each other, they may not realize that they are harassing”
- “Tell people about what happened or what he/she has done”
- “Continue with the programs that prevent the kids from bullying and also with the support programs. And very important inform the kids all the time about this kind of problems for them to be aware and make them feel confident to talk in case of any problem. Thanks for doing this!”
- “Make sure that everyone feels welcome and respected, even if the child has difficulties and challenges, every teacher should strive to kids feel happy at school and support those with difficulties, all students should be taught to respect, accept everyone”
- “Discussing the problem on a more regular basis with the students”
- “I think the school can communicate to both party’s (bullied and bully) parents whenever a bullying is reported. The school should not punish one party because they think that the party is bullying other just by asking the student what happened. Rather they should involve both parties parents because the children especially in younger grades may not be able to describe or explain what exactly has happened”
- “Through class discussion all students need to be aware of the potential”
- “Have a "social" subject at school for the all grades. Not just to talk about now and then but once a week, to keep it in the minds of the students”
- “Teach children exactly what is considered to be bullying, i.e. more than once, on purpose, teach what tattling is, teach steps in how to deal with bullying i.e., 1. Ask other child to stop, 2. Tell how it feels, 3. If unsuccessful, tell adult, do not retaliate, 4. If they see bullying, tell adults (do not tattle). Children need to know if it is bullying, otherwise don't tattle”

- “Encourage children all the time to tell their teacher about bullying, harassment or discrimination even if in doubt”
- “Preventing this behaviour requires attention and awareness on the part of the school and letting children know and feel that they can approach a teacher if there is a problem there needs to be enough supervision in the playground. There also needs to be time spent teaching children acceptance of others so bullying doesn't take place in the first place”
- “She, my daughter, said the most bullying she has seen was by the school bus stop before and after school. She said that "kids tend to deal with problems by arguing, but those that go to teachers for help get results." The kid who bullies others is an unhappy child. Find out what is going on with them first, and then get them to apologize to the victim face to face under supervision with a teacher/principal. This will be a memorable event and hopefully they will learn from it”
- “Have a code of conduct that everyone understands, explain this code to parents and students, adult role models who speak respectfully to children at all times. Have the arts in school. Music drama. Not make everything a competition. Teach kids how to react in situations. Lions quest for life skills. Talk about it, talk about it, talk about it”
- “Take what the child that is being bullied says seriously. Do not pass it off as children being children. Most children will not tell all because they are afraid of what will happen after. Bullies will go after the child that told. Talk to the bullies parents every time he/she does or says something. I have found that a lot of the name-calling is not taken seriously and the bullies know this. When a teacher only says "don't do that" and does nothing else, the bullies just laugh it off, and keep on doing it. The bullied child feels helpless and unheard. My child has come home and not wanted to go out after school because of name-calling. He/she feels like hiding”
- “It's unfortunate but sometimes the bully's are shuffled from school to school. That the school rules and consequences are clearly communicated. Talk about it...on-going positive reinforcement of expectations, changes and improvements within student body”
- “Your survey is a good idea but what I find is missing is a part about the adults in the school. My daughter was for a time being harassed by her teacher. This teacher

was one step away from bullying her. I can't even tell you the number of days my daughter used the stomachache excuse for not going to school because of her teacher. The problem was finally resolved when my daughter herself complained to the principal. My appeals to the school were explained away”

- “Make it open in discussion, observation part of regular behavioural discussion, don't make it an exception item, don't hide it as a "special needs" program. Make it visible, talk about it so no one thinks they can hide. Manage it as you manage any program talking about proper social developments and future life skills, future adult skills and relationship skills etc”
- “Keep encouraging children to tell someone even if they are afraid. Role playing”
- “I think every classroom should have a box where the students can put in any concerns they may have on these issues anonymously. A classroom meeting should be held on a weekly basis and the "appropriate" comments should be addressed at this time. Role playing and acting out situations that occur so that the students get an understanding of how it feels to be on the receiving end of bullying”
- “Open talking with parents find out what the deeper problem is home, money and separation etc. We also as parents need to teach our children to be tolerant for other children and family situations. St. Paul's is the best school is could put my child in”
- “Often teachers deal with bullying issues. I believe there is an obligation to advise the principle and parent of the [any] situation that references bullying”

Other (46)

- “Make children aware of the fact that adults are taking notice of school children's behaviour on the way home from school and children who behave badly towards others will be reported. Maybe school uniforms should be brought into the system. It will enforce more discipline”
- “Stay away from people you don't like”
- “This research should include younger grades as well. If calling a child "fat" or teasing him is considered bullying, than my child has been a victim since grade 1.”
- “This questionnaire is not particularly applicable to the school (St. Brigid). This school is almost entirely one religion, one colour, one socioeconomic demographic,

and one cultural background (second-generation Canadian). As a result there is very little opportunity for discrimination on the basis of those things. Good luck.”

- “Stand up, not stand by!”
- “Remove the slips (orange, white program when dealing with violence or major behavioural issues. This system does not work although the school will give you numbers saying it does. But it does not deal with the major issues in a timely manner, the culprit also blames the victim and makes their relationship worse, and the bully doesn't stop. 2. Management- if the management is not behind the program 100% it will fail, it's been 2 years of a week system and January 2005 new programs are brought in and not working yet, children are isolated from playing with other children. You need programs that actively have the victims a part of and stop rewarding the bully. I hope the system changes for the younger children. It may be too late for me. Thank you”
- “The biggest initiative in our school could take in reducing bullying is in creating a more active and organized playtime at recess. The busier the children are, the less likely they are to get involved in bullying”
- “Maybe stay away or avoid people. Preferably ignore”
- “More emphasis on being a classroom team instead of praising each student individually. Giving points or stars for accomplishments of one student adds resentment and competition amongst class members. Gives the students who have lower self-esteem feel even lower. As parents we strive to make our children the best they can be and to us this is important even if they want to become a farmer or to a lawyer. Sometimes the system has failed in new teaching methods. Sometimes the old simpler ways become important. To respect others, to respect those with higher authority. Thank you for reading!”
- “Sometimes adults are getting too involved in kid's quarrels and disagreements. Kids are prelabelled as to "good" kids or "problem" kids and how much their side of the story is believed is predetermined based on this. Also too much emphasis is placed on zero tolerance (especially physical) that the name calling and teasing has greatly increased- especially by the smart and sneaky students. Kids should be

allowed to play more games at recess and lunch hour. Like tag which involves touching. Don't fret so much about being sued!"

- “My daughter is strong willed and self-confident. Therefore, would not allow herself to be bullied. However, my son who used to attend was very much bullied by students and teachers. If I had filled this out for him it would have been totally opposite. When someone files a complaint, it needs to be taken very seriously, not just brushed aside”
- “A complaint I have and many of my friends who are also parents at our school have said they experienced the same things. When a child does approach a teacher to say they're having a problem, the response they most often get is, "go deal with it yourselves," especially when it happens on the playground. If a child goes to the trouble of going to a teacher for help, they're telling that teacher it's already gone beyond what they know how to deal with themselves. My other issue on the playground is our kids are bored. In our school, the grades get the play equipment once a week. The rest of the week they spend a lot of time standing around the tarmac doing very little. So much play equipment isn't allowed at school because of liabilities. But nothing has replaced how that equipment would occupy our kid's time. And we adults wonder why there's an increase in bullying? When kids are bored they'll find ways of entertaining themselves, even if it's at the expense of others”
- “Because I have had other children go to this school I find it all depends on the strength and personability of the principal.”
- “All staff and volunteers to act consistent when observing above...e.g. if you do/say this, then this is the result, and so on...”
- “Continue to follow through with any situations identified, discuss in classroom settings”
- “Increased school yard supervision, add more supervisors, clear consequences, increased exposure of principal in halls/schoolyard”
- “More action needs to be taken against the person doing the bullying! Support for the ones that are being bullied”

- “Provide "safe havens" supervised "reading/relaxation" areas during free time. e.g. lunches/recess, provide options in gym class, e.g. instead of having to play volleyball for the week, the child could choose running/skipping/riding stationary bikes/using treadmills, activities that increase heart rate, yet don't "centre" child out for being uncoordinated in sports. Provide extracurricular activities during lunches and recess to keep children's minds occupied, instead of "bugging/teasing" each other”
- “Bullying girl to girl is very difficult for teachers to see therefore intervene. Both my daughters have experienced isolation and gossip encouraged by one girl and enforces by a whole group. Each event occurred over several weeks to months and caused stress. One child was in grade 1 and one in grade 7. Similar bullying tactics with similar stress results- stomach aches, not wanting to go to school. My daughters were hesitant to have me involved. I wrote a note to each teacher. The bully was in a difficult class the next year and all bullying stopped. Girls do not see telling adults as a solution. They feel it will make things worse rather than better- even when they have seen positive outcomes in the past. Perhaps teachers could identify and stamp out verbal bullying quickly i.e. hall talk and derogatory comments. That way, it will not escalate and kids will see adults as active interveners rather than ‘oblivious’”
- “Well my child has only started attending St.Paul's but came from St. Aloysius in Kitchener as well. We have had a great improvement since changing school. My child is no longer dealing with being attacked by other students or verbal abuse. At St. Aloysius this was an on-going problem that was dealt with very poorly. At St. Aloysius my son was attacked at least 8-10 times and little to nothing was done about it each time. He was exposed to abuse by a teacher's helper and nothing was done even with him having marks and reporting it to the principal. He often was exposed to verbal abuse from his teacher; nothing was done when I reported it. He was always in trouble or suspended. He was never suspended at school before St. Aloysius or at St. Paul's after St. Aloysius. I had nothing but problems with St. Aloysius School and I would never tell anyone to send their child there”
- “Encourage kids to play with different people or at least don't leave someone out because they are shy or new to the school. Encourage every child to get along- Encourage kids to stick up for another child when they are being harassed or bullied”

- “I don't complain or my child doesn't because if it comes up for discussion the children responsible will make it harder on her way to and from school when she walks. I think the school should discuss these topics at least 1 period a week to make the bullies think about what they do. I myself approached a parent about her child bullying and she said she knows her child is very bossy and shouts at other children. She told her child about it, the child goes to school, tells the other children that I told her mom on her- only made it harder on my child. No matter what the school does, the parents must follow through at home or it doesn't mean a whole lot. Good luck”
- “Our school (St. Paul's) we think that the school should have official rules about not bullying. All though we do have a "hands off" rule”
- “Teachers should be more aware i.e. child hanging around teachers at recess, child playing alone, child playing with younger kids”
- “Take things a little bit more serious, and dealing with the problem right away”
- “I think that teachers (principal) could be given permission to deal with misbehaviour immediately in school when it happens. The problem lies with the parents who do not control their children at home. Children need to respect teachers and be afraid of possible punishment when caught hurting other children. Even though my daughter did not experience any wrong doing so far I hear some bad stories about kids misbehaving and teachers not responding. My guess is that teachers do not want to face an angry parent afterwards, kids know this. The only way that this problem is going to go away is to make parents responsible for their kid's behaviour. Why not to make them pay fines (just like traffic tickets) schools can use money”

Counseling for Victims (8)

- “Add student counseling so the students can talk more open and there would be someone on hand to help deal with the problems when they occur”
- “The staff and teachers should be modeling & promoting positive behaviour at all times (even when speaking to each other when they think their conversations cannot be heard). I have worked in schools in both the catholic and separate boards, and this

is a big issue. Damage is done when students think its ok to laugh, or when they hear role models and mentors speaking negatively of others. A child should always feel encouraged & supported at school by teachers and staff. They should always feel safe and protected and that, if they need to, they can talk to someone and find help or guidance. Every child has their right!”

- “Take the time to deal with student concerns, be proactive with students who are experiencing social problems, get them help!”

Uniforms (2)

b) POSITIVE COMMENTS (23)

- “Keep doing what they are doing - I like the zero tolerance rule”
- “St. Margaret’s does a wonderful job!!”
- “I am very satisfied the way St. Margaret’s school handles child's safety”
- “St. Margaret seems to be doing a good job controlling these issues”
- “We have not had any problems therefore I feel that they are probably doing a good job
- “I believe that St. Margaret’s school is completely on top of these situations and I don’t believe that there is anything that they need to change”
- “I think the schools are fine (at least St. Brigid). The parents need to stress it more at home.”
- “This is a great beginning. Listen to 2 sides at all times”
- “Keep on doing what they are doing. No tolerance!”
- “Done well. I can't think of more they do. I do not believe either of any children are bullied or harassed at St. Nicholas. They have been pleased with the class discussions”
- “Keep up the good work!”
- “I think the school is doing everything they can do to prevent this happening at the school at this time. I am happy with the school at this time”
- “I stand by them 100%”

- “I think my child’s school can just continue doing what they are now doing, and listen to the child for any concerns that may have occurred and act on them right away. This will ensure the safety of our children and possible help children get along”
- “They are doing everything that they can, and I am satisfied by this”
- “I feel that if the school maintains open communication about bullying and it’s unacceptability, students will feel comfortable in telling someone about it. These ones that are doing the bullying will be looked down upon and it will not be the "cool" thing to do”
- “I think she should keep doing what she is doing”
- “Nothing they have great preventative programs, suggestion for the survey you ask parents race but not the child’s my child is other mixed race half white and half black. So my answers will seem odd”
- “St. Paul has an excellent program in place and seems to be very concerned about bullying prevention”
- “I think my child's school is doing all the correct actions now”

c) NEGATIVE COMMENTS (without constructive criticism)

- “You want my opinion; you’re going to get it! First of all, the teachers and administrative staff should stop penalizing the children because their parents complain when there is bullying going on. I have complained time and time again about bullying, and my concerns are either trivialized or just outright dismissed as kids being kids. My daughter’s school life is crap at Bauer. She comes home in tears on a regular basis. She is constantly taunted, verbally abused and has been physically attacked many times. I can guarantee you probably won’t find any of that in her OSR. She has had clothing torn, but does the school do anything? NO. The “zero tolerance policy” that Sir Edgar Bauer supposedly has, obviously does not apply to my daughter. I have complained numerous times, and only feel like they are saying “Oh God, here comes that annoying woman again.” For example, there was an instance of a boy repeatedly harming my daughter; punching her, shoving her, pushing her to the ground and kicking her in the stomach and back. She also had her

jacket torn. She came home with bruises on her abdomen and back. I complained to the school repeatedly about instances like these, and nothing was done. No suspension of the student who has abused her, no letter to the parents, nothing. It finally got so bad I had to take matters into my own hands and I wound up calling the police and paying a visit to the parents at their house. Shortly after this happened they took their kids out of school and he is now home-schooled. But did the school give a *%^! NO. This school has so many instances of bullying. I hear of them all the time from other parents. Even from a parent whose daughter was in kindergarten at the time she was first bullied! When the children are reporting bullying on the playground, to the teachers, the teachers are telling the children to work it out for themselves. My daughter has been told this time and again when she has tried to report a problem. I guess they figure they don't get paid enough to have to deal with problems on the yard. I have even heard from former employees of how bad things have gotten at this school in particular. I would like to say one thing about this survey. You are missing the key demographic of the bullied child, the vast majority of bullying reasons are not linked to race or sexual harassment. Sexual and racial bullying is the smallest percentage of the problems on the schoolyard. The majority of problems arise when children are teased about their appearance. Whether the child is overweight, doesn't wear the right clothes, doesn't have the right hairdo, doesn't fit in with a particular crowd, or just perceived as not that smart, the list goes on and on. Those are the children who are ostracized, left out, and wind up killing themselves because they have been taunted to the point where they just can't take it anymore. My 11-year-old daughter has been to the doctor with severe stomach pains, due to a possible ulcer forming. SHE'S 11! She has even said to me that she hates school. She continually talks about wanting to move, and how she doesn't want to go to that school anymore. She says she feels worthless, and wishes she had never been born. This scares the daylights out of me! At 11 years of age, there should be normal stresses in a child's life, not whether or not they deserve to live. Yet the school does nothing. The system in place disgusts me right now, not only as a parent, but as someone who works in the field of education. I think we should be doing more to ensure that bullying stops. By mainly focusing on sexual harassment and racism at

this age, you are selling the potential of this survey short. Because sexual and racial bullying makes up for such a small part of bullying I think you are not going to get an accurate account of how much bullying really is prevalent in the schools today. Children just do not have the tolerance for people they see as a little different from themselves. I sincerely hope that your survey enlightens the schools as to what kind of torture these children are subjected to on a daily basis, and I sincerely hope that they implement a plan that they will actually put into action, not just let look good on paper. I, for one believe it would help out many, many children, and may even save their lives.”

- “I believe that the zero tolerance policy is nonsense. Schools get caught up in the small details such as playing tackle football and throwing snowballs, while missing the big issues such as harassment and humiliation. Current systems ban the activities that all kids enjoy doing and allows most hurtful behaviours”
- “This is occurring with the special education students. They are behaving inappropriately but no reprimanding is followed through”
- “Teachers should always prevent verbal bullying/harassment. There was an incident this year when a teacher openly criticized the record of bad behaviour of a certain student to the entire class. This is unacceptable. My son was upset about this and especially was upset for the affected student. This sets a bad example”
- “Unfortunately, I do not have an answer for this question- one that I think would work anyway. Some kids seem to thrive on being mean and hurting others and seems to have followers and form a group. Maybe stiffer punishment for repeat offenders may be necessary. Good luck with your survey and finding a solution”

d) NO COMMENT (3)

- “No comment”
- “Don't know”
- “If you have a 12/13 year old son who does not communicate every single thing with you (as most do) it's pretty hard to answer these questions. The survey my son filled out would be more informative, as 90%of my responses were guesses. I am not aware of any bullying, so my answers were based on that.”

e) Recognize Cause of Bullying (without suggestion for change; 13)

- “Most bullying due to low weight, and being singled out by teacher for special projects, "teachers pet”
- “It is very grade specific at our school. Some classes, like this grade 7 class, are quite good. The Grade 8s this year are much worse. Previous years have been worse for my child. Split classes have been harder as fewer peers are available to befriend one another. My child was bullied for wanting to spend time with children from other classes during recess time in past years. Older children have been bullied for intelligence & weight issues (daily) at lunch & recess & in the classroom”
- “Watch teachers- some of them make negative comments to the children. Happened to my son last week- the teacher made some comment that my son "probably didn't study for his test." This after I had asked for extra work to help him at home. My son studied and did well, no positive comment from the teacher”
- “Both of my children have complained about bullying on the bus. They themselves have not been bullied but that have witnessed others being harassed. I don't think it is being dealt with in an effective manner”
- “Bullying is not always boy/boy girl/girl and boy/girl. Quite often girls bully boys and consequences are not always put in place. There are a few girls who bully boys but boys tend not to complain in fear of ridicule from peers (boys). Boys and girls should be equally responsible for actions and should be held accountable. I have seen this many times. A girl was slapping a boy numerous times in the face, finally dealt with properly. Mother said she was playing, but when asked to reverse roles she was angry. Equal/equal.”
- “We should have students more involved because they are the ones who know who is bullying 2) we should be aware that is not only the student but sometimes the teacher too. I bring this issue up because if they are the ones who are teaching, they are the ones who are setting the bad examples. This situation is happening in my daughter's classroom this year”
- “My child experienced racial discrimination and verbal bullying in grade 2. During recess it happened two times (separately) the boy was in grade 3. The teacher intervened and it seems things improved.”