



What is bullying?

Bullying is a relationship problem in which an individual or group uses power aggressively to cause distress to another. Bullying means any intentional written, verbal, or physical act which:

- is severe, persistent, or pervasive such that it contributes to an intimidating or threatening educational environment, or
- has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's education, or
- physically or emotionally harms another individual or his/her property

Bullying can occur through numerous types of behaviour which jeopardize the emotional and or physical safety of the victim. Some examples of bullying behaviour are:

- abusive comments
- name calling
- insults and put downs
- social exclusion
- intimidating behaviour
- threatening behaviour
- physical or violent behaviour

Bullying is not confined to the school environment. It occurs anywhere where children congregate; on the playground, in parks, on the bus, or in cyberspace. Neither is bullying confined to relationships between students. There have been situations where teachers feel bullied by parents and situations where students feel bullied by teachers. All incidents of bullying are considered unacceptable and will not be tolerated by The Toronto Heschel School.

What is Cyber-bullying?

Cyber-bullying is an emerging and very powerful form of bullying. Examples of cyber-bullying include

- threatening text messages
- the creation of mean-spirited websites
- spamming victims, using e-mail to spread malicious messages.



All members of the Toronto Heschel School community need to be aware that the school bullying policy extends to incidents of bullying which occur between Heschel students which may or may not occur on school premises due to the impact on the students' educational environment and experience.

Reporting and dealing with an incident of bullying:

Building a positive and safe learning environment requires the partnership of school administration, teachers, parents and students. The Toronto Heschel School is committed to dealing with bullying situations assertively, promptly and effectively.

- Students, parents, and staff are encouraged to immediately report incidents of bullying to the classroom teacher. If the teacher feels that it is an issue beyond his/her particular class, then it will be reported to the Division Head. If a child or parent feels that the teacher is bullying the student, then it should go directly to the Division Head.
- In response to the disclosure, a process will be established which will include working with the victim, the bully, and bystanders to resolve the situation, separately and, in some cases, together. The focus is on restoration of a positive, pro-social learning environment.
- Once a report of bullying has been made to a teacher, a thorough investigation will be conducted – including independent discussions with the victim, the bully, any bystanders and parents.
- These interviews will be documented. This documentation will be sent to the Division Head.
- An intervention strategy will be suggested and implemented which will include intervention with the bully, the victim and, in some cases, larger groups of students.
- If the situation is not resolved or is ongoing, a meeting will be held - participants may include parents, teachers, students and members of the school's administration.
- A plan for intervention, ongoing monitoring, and follow-up will be decided at that meeting and documented. The Toronto Heschel School may consult with other sources including legal counsel, the police, Jewish Family and Child Services etc.

As part of the overall strategy against bullying, The Toronto Heschel School is committed to implementing preventative strategies such as using classroom curriculum



to discuss issues as well as ongoing social inclusion education programmes in the classrooms and professional development for staff, utilizing peacemaking programs in the playground and ensuring adequate adult supervision and intervention particularly during structured activities.

Heschel's Role in Fostering Derekh Eretz

The school is committed to fostering consideration and respect, good manners, self-discipline, honesty, trust, cooperation and helpfulness. This is the guiding principle for relationships between the school and parents as well as the relationship between the school and its students.

The homeroom and specialty teachers bear the frontline responsibility for nurturing these attributes through modeling and guidance. Where a student does not respond positively to the teacher's efforts, the teacher will formally notify an Administrator in a timely manner.

This may include situations such as:

- a student persistently behaving in a manner which interferes with the ability of other students to learn or the teacher's ability to lead or teach;
- a student acting in a manner which physically or emotionally endangers himself or herself or another person;
- a student acting in a manner injurious to the reputation or ethics of the school or community.

The Administrator will develop a plan for behaviour modification for the individual student and will consult the parents as to the progress and expectations of the plan. The process will be time limited and monitored by the teachers and the Administrator. A review and assessment schedule will be drawn so that all parties understand the consequences.

If the behaviour modification plan does not achieve the desired results, then the Principal, on the basis of professional expertise and discretion, may choose one or more of the following options: a probationary period, a behavioural contract, suspension, refusal to re-enroll or expulsion.

Before taking the step of permanent expulsion, the Principal will present the matter to the Board of Directors and request that an ad hoc sub-committee be especially



constituted. The Principal will then seek ratification of the decision to expel by that sub-committee. If the decision to expel is ratified, the parent of the child involved may appeal to the Co-Chairs of the Board for reconsideration. The decision of the Co-Chairs of the Board will be final.

Adult Modelling of Heschel Values

Consistent with the school's philosophy of fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect, it is understood that all adults visiting the school premises will behave in a manner that is consistent with the school's values. Parents and visitors to the school should know that discretionary power is invested in the Head of School to prohibit a person from entering or remaining on school premises if his or her presence is detrimental to the safety or well-being of any person on the premises.

Social Inclusion

The community of The Toronto Heschel School shares a commitment to eradicating bullying and educating students in social inclusion.

The Toronto Heschel School is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment, free from bullying behaviour. Jewish ethical principles provide a framework for healthy relationship building within the school community. Our objective is to work together to resolve conflict peacefully, be inclusive and respect differences. Every member of The Heschel community (student, teacher, staff, volunteer and parent) is entitled to their personal dignity, and entitled to participate in our school community without fear for their safety or for the integrity of their personal space, physically or emotionally.

Jewishly, there is really no such concept as 'innocent bystander.' The Torah, Leviticus 19:16 states, *Lo ta'amod al dam re'eakha*, 'You shall not stand aside while your fellow's blood is shed.' At our school, one who witnesses an act of bullying is as obliged to take action as one to whom the act is directed.

The Toronto Heschel School's policy is to address bullying situations quickly, efficiently and sensitively. All members of the Toronto Heschel School community need to be aware that bullying is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.



The Toronto Heschel School, Revised 2022