

Responding to Bullying with the Gospel

Catholic Education's Response

Catholic education responds to bullying within a learning environment permeated by the Gospel. Renfrew County Catholic schools actively address bullying with concrete policies and practices designed to protect students' safety and dignity. Through these policies and practices, we are preparing today's youth to shape a more just and caring society. We recognize that ours is a privileged role in the Church's efforts to build a civilization of love.

A Wider Social Problem

The issue of bullying is prevalent in the wider culture at many levels. Our children see televised images of violence on a day-to-day basis; parents often struggle to maintain a stable home environment as hostile economic competition, decreases in public spending and lower job security become society's norm. These factors combine to provide fertile ground for bullying to emerge.

The Call to Act Justly

Our call as a Catholic educational community is to promote a school culture which resists bullying with the power of a living faith. The words of the prophet Micah highlighted in our board's Vision Statement emphasize what is expected of us in this task:

This is what the Lord asks of you: only this, to act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6, 8)

- o To **act justly** requires that we strive to be in right relationship with God and neighbour.
- o To **love tenderly** requires that our love for one another reflect God's tender, compassionate love for us.
- o To **walk humbly with our God** requires that we respond to the divine love poured into our hearts at Baptism, and seek to live as God's children in justice and love.

Love One Another

Jesus' *New Commandment*: "Love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 13,34) provides the foundation for Catholic education's response to bullying in all its forms. These words perfect the messages of Micah and all the prophets, and summarize the call of the Gospel:

"The entire Law of the Gospel is contained in the '*new commandment*' of Jesus, to love one another as he has loved us." (CCC No. 1970)

Guided by this Commandment through prayer, sacrament and communion with the Church, our Catholic schools actively work to develop a safe school culture that replaces bullying and violence with respect and compassion. In so doing, they contribute to the evangelization of the world, and the building of a Civilization of Love.

