O'Gorman High School
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Helping Make Schools Safer
New Legislation Outlines Reporting Requirements

Even one incident of bullying or harassment in school is one too many.

Schools must be places where everyone feels welcome, safe and respected. The *Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act* that comes into effect February 1, 2010, is the latest step in our strategy to help make Ontario's schools safer. It will affect how all school boards handle incidents at school.

This new law requires that all school staff report serious incidents that could lead to suspension or expulsion to their principal and that principals notify parents of victims when a student has been harmed. In addition, all staff who work directly with students, for example teachers or educational assistants, must respond not only to serious incidents but also to inappropriate or disrespectful behaviour among students. This could include racist or sexist comments, graffiti or vandalism, behaviours and activities that are unacceptable in Ontario schools.

Students need a safe and positive learning and teaching environment to succeed at school. But it isn't just the school's responsibility to make that happen. All of us have a part to play in making and keeping schools safe.

Ontario's Code of Conduct sets out clear standards for behaviour for everyone involved in the publicly funded school system. This includes students, parents/guardians, teachers, other staff members, volunteers and community partners. The code applies on school property, on school buses, at school-authorized events or activities or in other circumstances that could have an impact on the school climate.

Find out more about Ontario's strategy to help make schools safer. Check out the Safe School section of the Ministry of Education's at http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/index for more information on the *Keeping our Kids Safe at School Act* and what it means for you and your child. You'll also find information on the code of conduct, bullying prevention and other programs designed to help build a positive school climate.

Should you have any questions about the implementation of this legislation at O'Gorman High School, please feel free to call me.

Darren Berthier
Principal