



## Keeping Our Kids Safe At School

On February 1 the new Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act (Bill 157) came into force. This legislation supports the London District Catholic School Board's belief that all members of our school community – staff, students, parents, and community agencies – have a role to play in making our schools a safe place in which to learn.

The legislation states a province-wide expectation that:

- All school staff must report to the Principal those incidents that can lead to suspension or expulsion.
- For any incident that involves a suspension or expulsion, the Principal will contact the parents of the suspended student, unless the student is 18 years or older or is 16 or 17 years and has withdrawn from parental control.
- If a student was harmed during an incident that involves a suspension or expulsion, the Principal will contact the parent or guardian of the victim. The Principal is authorized to give information about (1) the incident, (2) the harm the child has suffered, and (3) the steps taken to protect the child's safety, including any disciplinary measures that were taken in response to the incident. The Principal *cannot* name or provide any information about the suspended student. In addition, the Principal has the discretionary authority not to contact the parent or guardian of the victim if the Principal believes that telling the parent(s) or guardian would place the student at risk of harm within the home.

In addition, Bill 157 requires staff who work directly with students to appropriately respond to incidents that have a negative impact on school climate. These incidents could, for example, include racist or sexist comments, graffiti, or vandalism. Such incidents are unacceptable in our Catholic schools.

Bill 157 is a welcome addition to the Board's approach to progressive discipline. It is entirely supportive of current Board procedures, including the System Code of Conduct and protocols with the Police and community agencies.

If you have any questions about Bill 157, please contact your Principal or the Superintendent for Safe Schools, John Mombourquette at [j.mombourquette@ldcsb.on.ca](mailto:j.mombourquette@ldcsb.on.ca)