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After 2.5 years of alleged bullying, charges laid

Police: Name-calling escalated to physical assaults

By IRENE THOMAS, Sun Media

An investigation into bullying accusations at a Durham Region high school that allegedly started over two and a half years ago has resulted in charges being laid against a 15-year-old.

Staff at Brock High School in Cannington - southeast of Beaverton - called Durham cops after a 14-year-old student was allegedly assaulted during lunch break.

The teen boy was charged with three counts of assault after an investigation. All charges are related to recent assaults that occurred at the high school over the lunch hour.

The victim alleges that the bullying has been ongoing for about 2-1/2 years and began when the victim and the accused were both in public school, starting in the form of name-calling and escalating into physical assaults, police said.

"It is disturbing to us that this sort of pattern has allegedly happened over a period of years and that the situation became increasingly more serious," Durham Regional Police spokesman Dave Selby said.

In one assault, the suspect allegedly shoved the victim and caused him to lose his balance and fall down a flight of stairs. This was not immediately reported to police.

In another instance, which school officials reported to police, the 15-year-old is accused of choking the victim into unconsciousness.

Selby said it is often difficult for the victim of bullying to come forward.

"Parents and caregivers need to remind their children that if they're being intimidated or harassed, they need to tell an adult that they trust - whether it's a family member, a teacher, a pastor, whoever they feel comfortable with," he said. "This information needs to be relayed to police as soon as possible, because we can't act on what we don't know about."

Durham North Schools superintendent John Beatty said the accused has "been removed" from the school, but would not say whether the teen was permanently expelled or suspended for a period of time.

"It is our practice not to share that sort of information about individual students," Beatty said.

He added the school board "does not tolerate bullying."

"It is unacceptable behaviour and we urge all of our students to report any case of bullying right away."

Anyone with new information about this investigation is asked to contact Det.-Sgt. Herb Curwain at 1-888-579-1520 ext. 2674 or anonymously to Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).