

An important message for parents and carers about bullying issues

In this time of heightened awareness of bullying and violence in schools, I would like to reassure all parents and carers that our school is vigilant in this regard and takes a proactive stance on bullying.

As a community it is important that we are clear about what is and is not bullying. Playground disputes and quarrels that occur from time to time, and are resolved by the participants sometimes with peer and staff support, do not constitute bullying. Bullying pre-supposes an imbalance of power, is systematic and ongoing oppression. (Prof. Ken Rigby, "bullying in schools & what to do about it." 1996)

While we accept that bullying may occur in schools, this school will always work to empower students to self manage their behaviour and there by addressing both perceived and real power imbalances.

As a school, it is our highest priority that every student feels safe and secure in our supportive school environment.

Students are frequently and consistently reminded that bullying behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at this school. I ask that parents and carers take some time this week to speak with their children about bullying and to remind them of the importance of treating others with fairness, dignity and respect.

If you believe your child is being bullied or may be involved in bullying another student, I urge you to contact your child's teacher, a Deputy Principal or me to discuss the ways we can help to support you and your child and address the issues and associated behaviour.

Our school community has a number of proactive strategies, programs and resources to combat bullying and harassment, including:

Strategies

- Teach appropriate forms of behaviour through the curriculum (formal and informal)
- High Five (speak friendly, speak firmly, ignore, walk away, report)
- Debriefing (after first break each day)
- School Leaders, Student Councillors and Year 7 students as playground buddies (for Junior School)
- Counselling (for individuals and groups)
- Individual student management plans
- Classroom behaviour management plans
- Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students 2009.

Programs

- "MPOWER Girls" (Girls' relationship management)
- "Revved UP" (anger management strategies for boys)
- "Protective Behaviours" (P-3 students).

Resources (additional to teaching staff and Admin team)

- Chaplain
- Guidance Officer.

For more information on these strategies, programs and resources, please contact the school office.

Jinibara State School takes very seriously its responsibility to keep our students safe and to ensure our school community is empowered to manage student behaviour.

I urge any parents and carers who are concerned about bullying to contact the school directly.

Kind regards

Ray Bloxham

Principal