KEEPING SAFE - GROWING STRONG

Our students' social and emotional growth is absolutely critical to their academic achievement. The goal of our school-wide, Character Education program is to assist students in the development of key character traits for forming and maintaining strong, healthy relationships and ongoing decision making.

Bullying is often considered a problem which only happens at school. In fact, bullying is part of everyday life from childhood to adulthood. There can be bullying towards family members, co-workers, customers, retail clerks, etc. (the list can go on forever).

Sometimes **all** aggressive or mean behaviour is called bullying, yet when we look at the definition of bullying we can see that this is not the case:

> *'Bullying is a conscious, **repeated**, hostile, **aggressive** behavior of an individual or a group abusing their position with the **intention** to harm others or gain real or perceived **power**.'*

Whatever definition of bullying is used, all contain a similarity in that the behaviour is **repeated, aggressive** and **intended to gain power**.

Our school-wide, Character Education program is an ongoing, proactive approach to helping our students (your children) understand bullying and how to make respectful, bully-free relationships. Our students are also taught how to seek help when required. A chart to help assist in determining what are bullying and what are not bullying behaviours has been prepared as a tool for you to discuss concerns with your children and school staff.

If there are any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact your child's teacher, vice-principal or principal. Together, home and school can support our children growth in a safe secure environment.

Bullying—What Is and is Not Bullying

One definition of bullying is:

"Bullying is a conscious, **repeated**, hostile, **aggressive** behaviour of an individual or a group abusing their position with the *intention* to harm others or gain real or perceived **power**."

Whatever definition of bullying is used, they all contain a similarity in that the behaviour is **repeated, aggressive and about gaining power**.

What Is Bullying	What is *Not* Bullying
Any of the following ***aggressive*** behaviours are bullying if the actions are ***repeated***, and done with the ***intention of gaining power***.	Any of the following ***aggressive*** behaviours are not bullying if the actions occur ***once*** (i.e., no pattern) or done with ***no*** *intention of gaining power*.
Physical Attack such as: • Bumping into someone • Pushing, Shoving, Tripping • Hitting (directly or with something else) • Punching, Kicking • Fighting	**Physical behaviours** such as: • accidently bumping into someone • Making others play things a certain way (natural behavior—everyone likes things done their way) • Any of the behaviours listed to the left (pushing, shoving, tripping, hitting, etc.) which occurs ONCE (i.e., is not a repeated or pattern of behavior)
Verbal Attack—for any kind of difference, such as: • Racial • Gender • Sexual Orientation • Physical (height, weight, glasses, etc.) • Skills Ability/Disability (too smart, stupid, spaz, etc.) • Physical Appearances (cloths, jewelry, hair cut) • Economic Status • Marital Status • Religion • Association with a Group • Threats and Intimidation • Taking Possessions or Stealing (eg. hat, money, etc.) • Exclusion from groups/activity	**Verbal behaviours** such as: • A statement of dislike toward or about someone • A single act of telling a joke about someone • Arguments or heated disagreements between two or more people/groups (the pattern of which is not repeated to gain power) • Expressions of unpleasant thoughts or feelings regarding others
Non-Verbal Attack such as**:** • Staring or glaring • 'Pretending to whisper' while looking at someone • Shunning	**Non-verbal behaviours** such as: • Being excluded • Not playing with someone • Choosing different people or groups to play with from time to time