

January 22, 2009

Dear Whittier Families,

Every Seattle Public School is required to have an anti-harassment/anti-bullying policy and plan of action. I am happy to announce that preliminary steps have been taken for Whittier to conform to this requirement. On Wednesday, January 21, the staff participated in an anti-bullying workshop facilitated by Ms. Celia Arriaga, Prevention/Intervention Specialist. There are two national programs that have been implemented by several schools: 'Second Step' and 'Steps to Respect.' The focus of the professional development for Whittier is 'Steps to Respect.'

In this session, we learned the definition of a bully. A bully is one who has intent to harm, an imbalance of power, and who repeats his or her actions. Bullies were usually bullied themselves. Not only can a child be a bully, but adults as well (i.e., workplace bullying). Some forms of bullying include: physical, verbal, teasing, gossip, and lock-outs. We will learn more as the class moves forward.

Staff members were administered a quiz. I have printed the quiz on the back of this Wave for you to take and discuss with family members and especially your children. As principal of Whittier Elementary School, I take bullying and harassment very seriously. We do not have an in school policy as of yet, therefore, we are required to enforce the policy of the district. As Celia explains, it is easy to assume that there is no bullying. However, the fact of the matter is that bullying occurs in schools throughout the country. We have witnessed this in many of the school shootings.

We have scheduled two additional workshops for the staff. They are scheduled on March 11, and 18, from 8:00 a.m. until 8:50 a.m. Please feel free to join us. I ask that you call the office to confirm, if it is your intent to attend and participate. If you have questions, please feel free to contact Cliff Brown, our school counselor. Mr. Brown is responsible for ensuring that Whittier has an anti-harassment/bullying school-wide policy and that it is implemented by no later than April of 2009.

Enjoy the rest of the week and this weekend. Please remember that there will be NO SCHOOL for students on Monday, January 26, 2009 as it is a professional development day for staff. Some teachers will participate in Writers Workshop; others will meet at school, while others will attend workshops in their specialized areas (P.E., music).

Sincerely,

Cothron L. McMillian
Whittier Principal

True and False Quiz

1. Studies suggest that about 10% of children are bullied by others. T F
2. Most kids who are bullied tell a teacher or a parent/guardian. T F
3. Girls bully just as much as boys; they just do it differently. T F
4. Bystanders usually watch when kids get bullied. T F
5. Most students who observe bullying wish they could help. T F
6. Kids who silently watch bullying usually make things worse. T F
7. Some kids who are bullied seem to ask for it by the way they behave. T F
8. Once a bully, always a bully. T F
9. Sometimes grownups don't stop bullying because they don't see it happen, don't hear about it, or don't understand how much it hurts. T F
10. Intervention is the most effective way to stop and prevent bullying. T F