

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVE at RBPS

We'd like to thank all the parents, learners and teachers who assisted us with completing the surveys on bullying earlier this year. We have been able to collate all the information and analyzed the results. We have also included an information note for parents to assist them with future bullying issues. We are in the process of developing a bullying policy which will be finalized in 2010.

I'd like to thank all the moms especially Mrs Jean Alfeld who gave of their time to help with the collating of the information as well as the learnerships who assisted me in driving this project.

Mr J Salmans

Staff surveys:

- Bullying not identified as major concern.
- Belief that bullying prevention programme at RBPS is working and has helped staff and pupils deal with and understand bullying.
- Feel that more could be done to help parents have good understanding of what bullying is and the processes in place at RBPS, and to involve them more integrally in preventing/solving bullying issues.
- Generally believed that number of bullying incidents and severity has decreased and that the school's atmosphere is mostly peaceful.

Learner surveys:

- Majority said they had not been bullied in past 2 weeks.
- Feel safe in classrooms, but only 'kind of safe' in playground, corridors and going to/from school.
- Saying mean things and spreading rumours were identified as common forms of bullying, while physical bullying was not seen as major problem.
- Bullies are normally in same grade or one above.
- Most boys who are bullied tell their parent/s and fewer tell a teacher.
- Very few learners acknowledged ever bullying others.
- Majority said they regularly witnessed: teasing, name calling, saying mean things, spreading rumours, excluding others.
- Making sexual comments to be mean was identified as a common occurrence.
- Gangs were viewed as somewhat of a problem.
- 63% said they thought bullying was a huge/big problem at RBPS.

Parent surveys:

- Many parents expressed their appreciation for what is already being done in the school, the fact that bullying is taken very seriously, and the strong roles played by teachers and peer mediators.

There were some common concerns:

- In general it was felt that most bullying was in the form of teasing and name-calling. Bad language should not be tolerated.
- Security: Is enough being done to ensure the physical safety of the boys, particularly around Rouwkoop Rd – both inside the school and in the road? Should the boys be checked for small dangerous weapons? Security at the Gary Kirsten Oval is an issue.

- Break times were identified as problematic. Suggestions were that more teachers be on duty and/or more visible/involved. It was felt that sometimes they ignore issues, especially name-calling. Boys should be kept away from the berries. Bigger playground/s needed, especially for Grade 3's. More activities/clubs should be introduced during breaks for those who wish to participate.
- There should be somebody controlling/monitoring the tuckshop queues.
- Often it is the rugby 'jocks'/first team players who bully – perhaps there is too much emphasis on them.
- Issues of theft and damage to property were also highlighted. Lunch boxes are being damaged and other possessions being vandalized or stolen.
- System of reporting bullying should be clearer to boys and be made easier for them. Sometimes they feel like/are seen as 'snitches' if they report bullying.
- Sometimes boys who behave badly are rewarded with positions of authority, which undermines the good work being done and demotivates those who behave well.
- Teachers: should also refrain from bad language, bullying and overly aggressive behaviour. They should be role models at all times. They should not discriminate against those who are not sporty, even during PE. They must always hear (and take seriously) both sides of the story before taking action. How should parents report a teacher they feel is bullying?
- Students (coaches and teachers) must be properly briefed by teachers especially regarding potentially problematic behaviour. There should always be a teacher responsible for a sports team.
- School camps: there is not enough staff control at school camps and this is often where bullying occurs.

Conclusions:

While a great deal is currently being done effectively at RBPS (and recognizing that bullying can never be totally eliminated), there are certain areas where additional interventions and efforts can be focused.

The frequency of verbal and emotional bullying is cause for concern and this need to be addressed with the boys, possibly with a focus on respecting others.

Many boys witness bullying, but not a great deal of this is reported; more can be done to facilitate this.