

Weekly Notes from the School Climate Committee – 12/08/10

At Windham Middle School, our School Climate Committee consists of parents, teachers, counselors, and administrators. It is our goal to improve the school environment for all students by creating a safe atmosphere. We know that students learn best when they feel safe and know they will not be hurt, embarrassed, or harassed.

Bullying is when someone intentionally and/or repeatedly hurts another person. There are three things that are present in bullying situations:

1. There is always a perceived difference in power between the person who is bullying and the victim. This may be a difference in size, strength, or social status.
2. There is intent to harm. The person who is bullying is physically or emotionally hurting the other person on purpose.
3. Bullying is often a repeated behavior, though it can be a single significant incident, involving a written, verbal, or electronic communication.

Bullying can be done in a direct way such as pushing someone into a locker or destroying homework. It can also be done indirectly in a more subtle and covert way by spreading rumors or excluding someone. The following are different types of bullying behavior:

1. Physical bullying is harm to a person or property.
2. Verbal bullying includes taunting, teasing, name-calling, extortion, and threats.
3. Relational aggression is harm to someone's self-esteem or group acceptance.
4. Cyberbullying involves the use of technology to harass or intimidate another person.

If your child questions the appropriateness of the behavior of others, or even her own behavior, tell her to ask herself the following questions:

- Is there a difference in size or is one person stronger, older, or more popular than the other?
- Is the situation hurting, embarrassing, or making someone uncomfortable?
- Does it keep happening?

It is our intention to create the best educational experience for your children. Bullying behavior undermines that objective. Please feel free to contact the school counselors or administrators if you have questions regarding our policies and procedures regarding bullying. Look for future articles from the School Climate Committee to help create a positive environment at Windham Middle School.

Resource:

Urbanski, J. and Reubens, J. (2010). *A bully free school year: 40 weeks of bullying prevention activities*. Boone, NC: Character Development Group, Inc.