What is Bullying?

**Definition:**
“Bullying is repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons”. Rigby, K. (1996) *Bullying in Schools*. ACER, Melbourne.

Bullying is a deliberate attempt to make your child feel uncomfortable or unhappy.

To help your school be a safe and happy place for your child, it is important that you work with the school to solve any bullying problem.

Bullies can be anywhere...at school, at work...even neighbours. It is important that your child learns to deal with bullies.

Waitara Public School has zero tolerance for bullying. But remember, if we don’t know about it, we can’t solve it.

**BULLYING CAN BE...**
- Giving nasty looks
- Making rude gestures
- Calling names
- Being rude and impolite
- Spreading stories and rumours
- Teasing
- Keeping someone out of a group
- Acting in an unpleasant way near someone
- Hurting someone physically
- “mucking about” that goes too far
- Harassment

Any form of discrimination based on disability, gender, race or religion.
YOUR CHILD MAY BE BEING BULLIED IF HE/SHE...
• Suddenly does not want to go to school
• Has bruises but won’t talk about them
• Suddenly is unable to sleep
• Becomes moody
• Frequently feels sick with vague symptoms

THE ROLE OF PARENTS:
The following suggestions are made to parents through print materials and at Parent Information Meetings.

1. Take an active interest:
   - In your child’s social life
   - In what is happening at school
2. Encourage your child:
   - To bring friends home
   - To accept and tolerate differences in others
3. Build your child’s self confidence:
   - By recognising and affirming his/her positive qualities
   - By valuing him/her for who he/she is
4. Discuss with your child:
   - The school’s expectations about behaviour
   - Ways to respond if his rights are infringed
5. Encourage constructive responses:
   - Physical bullying or persistent teasing should be reported
   - Hitting back or retaliating with name calling won’t solve the problem
6. Set an example:
   - Be firm, but not aggressive in setting behaviour limits
   - Be positive in the things that you say and do
7. Be alert for signs of distress:
   - Unwillingness to attend school
   - Dropping off in academic performance
   - Damaged clothing and frequent loss of personal property
   - Loss of confidence and uncharacteristic mood changes
   - Withdrawn from social activities
8. Act:
   - If your child is being bullied at school, report it to a teacher, or to the Principal. Your report will be followed up.

NO ONE HAS THE RIGHT TO BULLY ANYONE ELSE

Children who are bullied feel frightened and powerless. They sometimes blame themselves. Being bullied can seriously harm self-esteem and prevent successful learning.

It is important that the victim take the appropriate action to stop the bullying.

Ignoring the bullying behaviour is only a short-term strategy. If the bullying continues more than a few days some other action needs to be taken.

Avoiding the situation by going to another school may not solve the problem as there are bullies everywhere.

Responding to bullying by retaliation or with violence rarely solves the problem and often gets the victim in more trouble with other students and with the school discipline code. The school cannot tolerate violence no matter what the reason.

The most appropriate action is to tell someone at the school and work with the school staff to solve the problem.

IF YOUR CHILD IS BEING BULLIED...

Tell your child that:

- It is not his or her fault
- He or she has the right to feel safe and happy
- He or she has the right not to be bullied
- It is all right to walk away
- It can be stopped
- It is all right to tell the school staff
- By acting on the bullying you are also protecting other students from the bully.

WHAT WILL THE SCHOOL DO IF BULLYING IS REPORTED?

- Assure him/her that the problem can be solved and then provide ongoing support
- Investigate the problems raised
- Treat everyone involved with fairness
- Take action that is appropriate to the particular circumstances - this may be:
  o Mediation
  o Disciplinary action
  o Warnings
  o Social skills program
  o Counselling
  o Parental involvement

CONTACTS: