



Developing Respect and Care in the RJ Community

RJ is a place where all students, staff, other workers and parents should feel safe. Respect and care for others should be shown by every person in the School community. Jesus' example of 'love in action' should be followed. His love was full of kindness and compassion, always looking for the good in others, always wanting the best for others. His love was also sacrificial (i.e. giving up something for another person), even to the extent of giving His own life.

A whole School approach to promoting positive relationships necessitates:

- a focus on developing a supportive and safe School environment;
- a commitment to a belief in human potential for learning and growth;
- a shared responsibility for addressing any social problems in fair and unifying ways.

It is important to recognise that the student's home environment, primarily, together with the School's culture and programs, impact upon the student's attitude and behaviour and contribute to the formation of their values. RJ endeavours to promote preventative and responsive measures, as exemplified below:

- activities to raise students' awareness about bullying and what to do if bullied are incorporated into some learning activities;
- particular lessons from the Personal Development and Health Syllabus document/s incorporate 'Social Skills Training', as do the School's Secondary Home Group Programs; and
- it is recognised that technology makes it possible for students to engage in 'cyber bullying', noting that the School's ability to undertake its normal processes of investigation and response may be impaired if such misbehaviour occurs off School premises.

Bullying Behaviour

Bullying is repeated incidents involving

- a bigger, stronger or more powerful person towards a smaller or weaker person, or
- a group of people towards a single, less powerful person.

Bullying is a wilful act - the conscious and meditated desire to hurt another. It is not the same thing as 'aggression' or 'violence', although elements of these may be present when bullying occurs. It is not the same thing as fighting, teasing or quarrelling between people of about the same 'strength' or in the same 'position'. What makes it different is that the incidents are ongoing and there is an imbalance between people, of one or more of the following: size, strength, number, power.

Specific examples of bullying are:

- Verbal - the person is called names, 'put down', threatened;
- Physical - the person is hit, tripped, poked, kicked or belongings are stolen or damaged;
- Social - the person is left out, ignored or has rumours spread about him/her; and/or
- Psychological - the person is stalked or given 'dirty looks'

Research has shown that males are more often bullied by a single individual and females more often by groups.

What Are The Signs?

Bullying may be very hard to see. Victims may already be having trouble getting on with other children or with teachers. They are often picked on by bullies for this reason. Bullying usually happens out of sight, away from teachers or other adults. The people who are most likely to know what is going on are other children. Children who are being bullied often don't like to tell anyone because they feel weak or ashamed, or are frightened that it will only make things worse. They also feel it is wrong to 'dob in' or tell tales on other children. If they tell anyone, it is most likely they will tell their parents – usually their mother – or their friends before they will tell a teacher. Some tell-tale signs are:

- bruises, scratches or cuts that the child can't really explain;
- torn or damaged clothing;
- damaged or missing belongings;
- headaches, stomach aches and other pains that the child can't put a finger on;
- unexplained tears or depression;
- unusual outbursts of temper;
- not wanting to go to school;
- not wanting to play with friends;
- wanting changes in the way he or she travels to and from school;
- school work falls off in quality;
- wanting extra money without giving a reason.

Prevention Strategies at RJ - Staff

Prevention of bullying or reducing its severity will be greatly influenced by teachers actively supervising students and intervening in situations which potentially could lead on to bullying. Expectations of staff at RJ include:

- to personally model pro-social, respectful behaviour and to promote the full involvement of students without fear of ridicule, sarcasm or undue pressure;

- to carefully monitor student behaviour in class and, whenever possible, during non-class times;
- to assure students of their availability at any time, if there are concerns which need to be shared and to actively work against the notion that telling someone about bullying behaviour is ‘dobbing’;
- to communicate relevant information to other staff members, particularly the appropriate Welfare Co-ordinator or Deputy Principal, about any bullying incidents; and
- to be mindful of how students are allocated in group activities or selected for teams.

Prevention Strategies at RJ - Students

Students are encouraged to:

- report any incidents of bullying-type behaviour to an older student or a teacher (and/or write a note)
- ‘stand up’ for any victim of bullying-type behaviour, where appropriate
- encourage friendly actions and resist any pressure from others to ‘pick-on’ or tease another student

RJ Intervention Procedures – The “Bully”

1. The “bully” is interviewed and counselled by the relevant Co-ordinator or Deputy Principal. Essentially, this would involve sharing his/her concern with the bully on behalf of the person being victimised and inviting the bully to remedy the situation in constructive ways. The ‘Bullying Action Plan’ is completed and signed by the Co-ordinator or Deputy Principal. Consequences may apply. Subsequent behaviours will then be monitored for a period of time.
2. If the bullying behaviour continued, the bully’s parents would be contacted to both inform and to enlist their active co-operation. The bully is placed on the ‘Daily Report’ system for a period of time, to elicit feedback from teachers. The Deputy Principal, in liaison with the Co-ordinator, oversees this system and implementation of the appropriate consequences.
3. If the bullying behaviour continued any further the Principal may become involved and more serious consequences would be considered. (For each of the above steps the essential details of interviews are recorded and filed).

RJ Intervention Procedures – The “Victim”

1. The person being bullied is informed about the interview with the bully and is encouraged to let an adult (teacher, parent) know immediately if the bullying re-occurs. The parents of the victim are notified by the Co-ordinator or Deputy Principal.
2. In addition, relevant to the above, strategies will be suggested to the victim to help him/her deal more effectively with bullying problems.
3. The same as above.