



Bullying Prevention Week (November 24- 28, 2009)

by Rob Conley, Director of Pupil Services/Psychologist

From Monday, November 24, through to Friday, November 28, RIS and RIST celebrated Bullying Prevention Week as did countless schools in North America. It was terrific to celebrate the fact that we will not tolerate being cruel to each other.

The week-long celebration included a range of entertaining and educational events. Students prepared and presented skits based on the anti bullying theme at section assemblies. This was reinforced by the launch of the Anti Bullying Campaign website designed by Win Leerasanthanah from Grade 12. Win has worked with the Student Council Anti Bullying Committee for a year and a half now and has put a great deal of time and commitment into this project. The principal feature of the site is to provide students with an online way to report to us if they are being bullied. When counselors are notified, they will ask all concerned to come in and talk about it. Our most important response is not to punish anyone (unless the bullying is very serious) but to talk to everyone involved so that the bullying stops.

At assemblies on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, our Kindergarten students sang us their song 'Stand Up Against Bullies.' Bullying happens at all ages and it was simply great that our Kindergarten students significantly contributed to the celebration by telling us to be courageous and to help stop bullying.

They were simply terrific.

During this week students also experienced a range of lessons on aspects of bullying. Lessons and discussions looked at the role of the bystander. The bystanders are the people that watch. Most people who bully like to have an audience. We let these bystanders know that they can stop



bullying. There are many ways to do this. The bystander can walk away, or they can ask the person being bullied to have lunch with them, and if they are really brave they can step in and ask the bully publicly to stop.

Students also talked about cyberbullying and were asked to consider the simple message that if you would not say something cruel to someone's face then "don't say it online".

The school's language policy was also discussed by students to show how someone can be socially isolated by not being able to speak the language of the group. If we can all adopt English as a common language at school we can all participate in friendship with each other.

We need to our fellow students from Kindergarten when they tell us to "Stand Up Against Bullies."

