A Focus on Wellbeing:
Building Skills to Prevent Bullying Behaviours

All schools face challenges with student behaviours and interactions that are negative, harmful, thoughtless, unkind or targeted.

While a focus on bullies and their victims is common, it is important that all children develop skills to support them in responding to people and situations they feel are not positive or constructive.

With these skills, children and their families are able to engage in conversations to recognise and label behaviours for what they are and seek out positive solutions to create change.

Children are exposed to different lives and experiences, and so see different standards of interaction as acceptable. With a positive culture, a school is in a position to create standards that focus on inclusion, optimism and consistency.

1. Encourage Ownership

In developing ownership skills, children are better placed to recognise their choices and the impact of those choices on themselves and those around them.

Discussing situations as they stand and seeking responsibility from all parties, there is the potential for children to accept ownership of their choices and the consequences of these decisions.

2. Strengths Awareness

In building an awareness of strengths in children we can create a positive platform for discussion of difference, valuing the unique gifts and talents each child brings to the school or family and so the different ways children think, talk and develop relationships.

Respect for individuality can reduce the feeling of exclusion and informs the school community as a whole.

3. Value Self-Confidence

Offer children the chance to develop confidence in their choices, actions and decisions by including reflection in their week.

Support families in having discussions to increase confidence based on evidence of great friendship, independent decision making, acknowledging mistakes, valuing others and themselves. Journaling can be a wonderful opportunity for children to improve these skills.

4. Recognise the Power of Language

Lead by example in recognising the power of language. Offer questions that allow children to share their experiences, identify areas of growth, compliment others or understand the impact of their words on others.

Have a visual list of words or images to support considered and thoughtful conversation and wordplay in your school.

5. Establish a Positive Culture

Create behaviour standards for those working with children in your school, and explain the importance of positivity in diminishing negative actions, such as bullying. Allow all staff the opportunity to be true to themselves and to share stories of growing skills, taking ownership, failing, and learning how to deal with people with varied opinions and ideas to their own.

6. Community Involvement

Include your community in your plans, language and expectations of behaviour. Share strategies parents can use at home to reinforce messages of acceptable behaviours, attitudes and words with suggestions of how to practice this outside of school. Share situations your school is challenged by for families to discuss at home, noting the school's expectation and response.

7. Be Solution Focused

Encourage families and their children to solve problems they face with people, school work and around the playground. Develop critical thinking so that students consider broadly the choices that may be available and the impact of those choices on themselves, others and the school community.

Praise independent problem solving and creating think tanks for students to work together to resolve issues within the classroom in a positive and proactive manner.

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