



Year-Long, All-School Anti-Bullying Program Kicks Off

The Wesley School is a wonderful community committed to providing our children with a place where they can learn and grow together. As part of this, we discuss things that as parents and teachers we wish were never a part of their lives. Bullying is a widely discussed topic at schools, and yet some still treat it as a normal part of the growing up process. We couldn't disagree more. Fortunately, awareness about bullying is growing daily. Many schools are adopting programs and policies to try and put an end to this behavior.

Wesley introduced an extensive, school-wide, anti-bullying program that will be used from here on forward. This program was initiated and implemented by faculty members who worked during the summer to design a program and prepare materials. The entire faculty was trained during our in-service week. The key to the program's success is that the whole school is tackling this issue together. The faculty will be able to be consistent and the children will not be surprised if, for instance, a 1st grade teacher approaches a middle school student about an incident. This program will be a part of everything we do on and off campus.

During the first four full days of school, the entire student body and faculty worked together half of each day to understand what bullying is and effective responses to it. Sometimes we split into "mix-it-up families" and sometimes by grade level. "Mix-it-up families" - are split by age levels: kindergarten through 2nd grade, 3rd through 5th graders and the 6th through 8th graders. Training and instruction are age appropriate. We learned the four major groups of people involved in bullying - bullies, victims, bystanders and allies. Student talked about what it means to be inclusive versus exclusive, the difference between good and bad choices, words used to describe feelings and ways to stay bully free.

Wesley is committed to this program. The topic of bullying will be woven throughout our curriculum, in discussions of literature and current events, chapel presentations, and in buddy groups. Our "mix-it-up families" will meet throughout the year. Sometimes we will send home "assignments" that encourage discussion on the topic with you at home.

The program will develop and evolve throughout the year and for years to come. What we learn this year will help us design and institute an on-going Anti-Bullying program for subsequent years.