

WILLIAM ANNIN MIDDLE SCHOOL

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October 29, 2010

Dear Parent(s) and/or Guardian(s) of Sixth Graders:

It is with great excitement that we write to you about our anti-bullying program for at WAMS. We hope this program will foster respect, caring, trustworthiness, and responsibility in our students.

In September 2002, the Governor signed into legislation an anti-bullying and harassment law. This legislation requires that school districts across that state have policies and procedures for dealing with bullying and harassment incidents that occur in schools. The Bernards Township School District has a proactive policy that meets the statutory requirements of this legislation. Bernards Township Schools Bullying Prevention Committee has expanded its initiative to reduce bullying in our schools by adopting the internationally known Olweus Bullying Prevention Program begun by Dr. Dan Olweus in Scandinavia over thirty years ago. The program was brought to the United States through Clemson University and Clemson continues to coordinate the program today training teachers, administrators, school resource officers, counselors, nurses, and others to work with their faculties and students to reduce bullying in our nation's schools. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program focuses on four major components: Individual, Classroom, School, and Community. At the heart of this program are parents, who assist teachers and students with supporting the program at home. Here at William Annin, we have an after-school bullying intervention program that will sensitize students who fail to be respectful of others to the affects of their behavior on other students and the overall school community.

Throughout the year, the sixth grade school counselors teach group guidance lessons addressing the six pillars of character education (fairness, responsibility, caring, citizenship, trustworthiness, respect) as well as bullying, harassment, and bias incidents. We consider bullying behaviors to be characterized by a person or group of people who repeatedly try to harm someone who is weaker or more vulnerable. It can involve direct attacks (such as hitting, threatening or intimidating, maliciously teasing and taunting, name calling, making sexual remarks, and/or stealing or damaging belongings) or subtler, indirect attacks (such as spreading rumors or encouraging others to reject or exclude others). All students are being exposed to the definitions, school policies, and consequences related to bullying incidents, including cyber-bullying, during assemblies this month. The small group guidance lessons always allow for open discussion and clarification on a more personal level.

Attached you will find a summary of the program's objective and a parent/student contract. We ask that you review the contract with your child and that both of you sign the contract together. Please return the contract to your child's homeroom teacher by Wednesday, November 3rd 2010.

We appreciate your time and cooperation with this matter. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your child's school counselor. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Karen Hudock
Principal

James Buist
School Counselor

Cara Miscia
School Counselor

Dr. Barbara Bush
SAC Counselor