

*Bullying* is a topic that has appeared often in the news recently and is on the minds of Moreland School District's staff members, as we started the current school year with Project Cornerstone's Expect Respect student workshops. Moreland has been excited to partner with Project Cornerstone for the past few years, to facilitate student-developed action plans to help make our schools a safe and enjoyable place for all students to learn. These plans include ways for students to engage peers, to create safe school climates where bullying is minimized and support and coaching are maximized, and to involve parents, teachers, and community members to help build critical, developmental assets.

*Bullying* is defined as one or more students seeking to have power over another student through the use of ongoing physical or emotional harassment, intimidation, or isolation. *Cyberbullying* has been defined as an individual or group willfully using information and communication involving electronic technologies to facilitate deliberate and repeated harassment or threat to another individual or group by sending or posting cruel text and/or graphics using technological means.

Some people do not view bullying as harmful to the health of children. However, studies have shown that some students who are consistently bullied have health, social, and family issues, suffer from low self-esteem, and are prone to depression as a result of being bullied. Bullying scares some students so much that they skip school – as many as 160,000 students across the United States on any given day (Pollack, 1998). Unfortunately, the news has recently profiled some students who, as a result of bullying, took violent action against their tormentors or themselves. Children who bully are more likely to get into fights, drop out of school, and as many as 60% may have at least one criminal conviction by the time they are 24 years old (Olweus, 1993). Unlike traditional bullying, cyberbullying provides anonymity and 24/7 access to victims. This anonymity causes bullying behaviors to escalate as normal restraints disappear. The effects of bullying are real and can be devastating to both the child being bullied and to the child who is bullying.

Moreland strives to enhance student learning by providing an orderly, caring, and nurturing educational and social environment in which all students can feel safe and take pride in their achievements and their school. We are making efforts to ensure that the school environments

are built through, and foster, positive interpersonal relationships among students and between students and staff.

If you are concerned that your student is being bullied or that your student is bullying others and you would like some assistance in dealing with the issue, please contact your student's teacher or the principal at your school. We are committed to providing your child with a high quality education in a safe, nurturing environment.

Sincerely,

Glen Ishiwata