

April 30, 2010

Dear Families:

While bullying in schools is not a new issue, recent events in the media have renewed discussions about this serious concern. I think this is an opportune time to inform parents about how the Junior/Senior High School is addressing this challenge. Like other communities around us, New Lebanon experiences bullying behavior. Additionally, technological innovations have brought new bullying venues for schools to address. We wish this were otherwise, but we face up to the fact that bullying behavior and the attitudes that can allow it to continue must be addressed on an ongoing basis.

Our code of conduct addresses the multiple elements of bullying behavior, including: harassment, defamation, discrimination, intimidation, physical aggression and cyber-bullying. We expect students, faculty and staff to report incidents of bullying. However, for us to challenge intolerance and bullying, in addition to disciplinary action we must provide educational interventions to improve our school's climate.

We began this year with an assembly on cyber-bullying presented by a New York State Trooper. Our students participate in the National Coalition Building Institute. Our students attended the Students Together Opposing Prejudice program and participated in a follow up assembly at New Lebanon to assist students in becoming allies to victims of bullying. Over the last two years, our junior high has participated in a "Random Acts of Kindness" week. Last year we brought Rachel's Challenge to our school to promote tolerance and kindness. These educational efforts are as much a part of our curriculum as any of the offerings in our course catalog and we continue to seek out additional programs.

By acting together, I am confident that we can maintain a school that supports equity, compassion and understanding toward all.

Sincerely,

Leslie Whitcomb, Principal